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THE LAW
OF CONGREGATIONAL USAGE

BOOKS ON CHURCH POLITY

by

WILLIAM E. BARTON

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THE LAW
OF
CONGREGATIONAL USAGE

BY

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1916

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By WILLIAM E. BARTON

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED WITH
ESTEEM AND APPRECIATION
TO

FRANK K. SANDERS, CHARLES S. NASH, WILLISTON WALKER, FRANK KIMBALL, NEHEMIAH BOYNTON, WILLIAM W. MILLS, HENRY A. STIMSON, OLIVER HUCKEL, LUCIEN C. WARNER, CHARLES S. MILLS, ROCKWELL H. POTTER, JOHN M. WHITEHEAD, HENRY M. BEARDSLEY, HENRY H. KELSEY, EDWARD D. EATON, ARTHUR H. WELLMAN, RAYMOND CALKINS, AND TO THE MEMORY OF SAMUAL B. CAPEN

WHOSE LABOR AND FELLOWSHIP I SHARED
DURING THE THREE YEARS OF THE WORK OF
THE COMMISSION OF NINETEEN ON POLITY, 1910-1913

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PREFACE

It is now a full half century since Dr. Henry M. Dexter published his "Congregationalism: What It Is; Whence It Is; How It Works." During these fifty years several briefer works and one large volume on our polity have appeared, but nothing that takes the place of that notable treatise, now long since out of print. If any other anniversary than the semi-centennial of Dr. Dexter's great book were needed to suggest the fitness of a modern work on the subject, such an event could easily be found in the swift approach of the Ter-centennary of the Landing of the Pilgrims.

Many changes have occurred in our polity in the last fifty years. Other changes, doubtless, will occur in the years to come. Ours is a growing polity, and the time will never come when it can be treated as a completed study. But the notable changes wrought by the National Council in 1913, and the general plans for the missionary organizations adopted in 1915, register the logical consummation of some movements that have been in evolution among us, and enable us to know in part and to prophesy in part. Our denominational development may be considered as having arrived at a degree of completeness so far as these recent changes are concerned. There is not likely to be a better time than now for the consideration of our progress as a denomination in the matter of government and administration.

Five years ago the author issued his pocket Congregational Manual, now in its seventh edition. The present work is not designed in any way to make that book less necessary or useful than it has proved to be. Very few paragraphs are identical in the two books. The present large volume leaves three of the four divisions of the Manual untouched—those on Parliamentary Law, Documentary Forms, and Orders of Service. This book is in

some sort an enlargement of the remaining section of the Manual, that on Congregational Theory and Practice. In this regard it sustains to the author's Pocket Manual essentially the same relation that Dexter's "Congregationalism" and Ross's "Church-Kingdom" sustained to their respective Handbooks.

Yet this is not all the author has endeavored to accomplish in the present work. Ever since the publication of his Pocket Manual he has cherished the hope and purpose of writing a book which might show not only what Congregational Polity is, but also how it has come to be what it is. Some of our denominational methods can be rightly evaluated only in the light of their development. Some of our present customs may not be permanent; and if we do not return by the way whence we have come, a knowledge of that way may at least assist us in our progress toward a more stable method.

This book is not a history of Congregationalism, nor even a history of Congregational Polity. But it seeks to set forth current Congregational usage with a sufficient historic background to afford a basis of judgment concerning its progress. To this end, the principal topics discussed contain not only the author's own judgment of current usage, but also quotations from eminent authorities, both of the present and the past. In many instances these quotations express the same general view as that of the author, and tend to establish a consensus of opinion. In other instances they are quoted as showing how customs have changed or are in process of changing. It is earnestly hoped, and fully expected, that no careless reader will regard the author as undervaluing the contributions which earlier writers have made to Congregational Polity because in some instances he records a different method than that which they recorded. As they set forth faithfully the theory and practice of their own day, so the author endeavors to do in his day. As not everything recorded by them proved permanent, so not every method or custom herein recorded

will be permanent. It is enough if each in his own day perform a needful service.

A word may be said as to the literary form in which the subject matter is presented. Each topic is introduced in a question. This method is chosen partly because of the advantage of a direct approach to the topics considered, and partly because many of these topics came to the author in this form, and are therefore actual questions that have risen in the experience of pastors and churches, some of them not answered adequately in books hitherto available. While the author has not been unmindful of the possible disadvantage of following this method throughout, and might have preferred in the case of some of the topics to have employed another form, it has seemed well to follow a uniform style with respect to the introduction of the subjects. In the later editions of Dr. Dexter's notable work appeared an appendix containing a list of questions which had been propounded to him in the years of his useful service to the churches, and these with the answers form an exceedingly valuable part of his book, as all who have used it are aware. Recent years have given rise to many questions, and perhaps there is no principal topic in Congregational usage which has not been presented to the author at one time or another. In the five years since the Pocket Manual was issued, he has been called into counsel in the matter of the organization of churches, and of the reorganization of district associations, state conferences, and the National Council. This service, as it has been as varied as it well could be, and it is hoped that the author has been able to put into this book some principles which he has learned out of a somewhat wide experience, and which will prove of real value to others.

A large portion of this book consists of actual questions that have been asked by ministers and churches, and the actual answers that have been given them. The people who asked the questions did not know that they were contributing to the making of a book, and were less careful to

divide their questions from all others that might have been asked than they were to get the information which might meet their immediate requirements. In the editing of the material, an effort has been made to eliminate needless duplication; but I have still preferred to treat each case with adequate fullness, even at the risk of incidental repetition, than to bring the subject matter into too severe bondage to precise logical division. As a consequence, there are not many cross-references in this book, a feature which I hope will be counted a sufficient virtue to excuse whatever duplication of material may appear.

I have not labored to make this book large, but to keep it within reasonable limits of size. I realized at the outset that the volume would be large, and must be large; there is no call for another small book on this topic. It is large; but there lie before me two piles of manuscript, one of that which goes into the book, and the other of what I had gathered for it but have been able to eliminate, and the pile that is not to be printed is larger than the other. Doubtless I should have done better had I interchanged some of the material in the two piles; but I have done my work under the pressure of many burdens, pastoral, editorial and professorial, and if I had waited and sorted till the work should have been perfect, it could never have appeared in print, and meantime would have been growing till the reading world of church polity could not have contained the books that might have been made of the material.

Let me call attention to the indexes, for on them I have spent much labor, and I wish the reader to avail himself of its results. This book is primarily a text-book, covering the whole field of the theory and practice of self-governing churches. But it is also a work of reference, intended for the man who wants information on a single point, and wants it quickly. For his sake I have made a table of contents containing not only the chapter-headings, but the full list, with folio numbers, of the questions treated under each general caption. This in itself will be, I hope, a quick guide

to the material of the book. As for that material itself, it is virtually a catechism, with practical questions, and direct answers, followed in some instances by quotations of authorities, quickly distinguished from the body of the text by a difference in type. There is also a full alphabetical index of subjects, more minute than the table of contents. I have added also a bibliography and a list of authors cited, and under the latter have given, not only the pages on which quotations from those respective authors may be found, but the matter treated in each separate quotation; so that if a reader remembers to have seen in this book an important quotation from an eminent authority, and that author has been quoted twenty times, the reader will not be compelled, as I sometimes have been in the use of other books, to make nineteen futile explorations before finding what he wants.

The Bibliography and List of Authors Quoted do not agree. There are authors whose books I have had occasion to refer to somewhat frequently but from which I have made no quotations; and there are authors who have no proper place in the bibliography of this subject who nevertheless have afforded an important quotation on some particular topic under discussion.

The reader will discover that in the latter part of the book I have given more space to the treatment of certain questions than the proportion which might have been indicated by the first part. The reason is that these more recent developments of our polity have little or no place in earlier books, and have seemed to merit some discussion and historical development. I have been less concerned with questions of proportion and consistency of method than with the attempt to give to those who are to use this book the information which they require. In matters long established among us, some things can be taken for granted; but in matters recently adopted, or still in their experimental stages, more of explanation, and even in some cases of discussion, appears to me desirable.

I have had free access to the Library of Chicago Theological Seminary, and during my summer vacation to the Congregational Library in Boston. During the National Council in New Haven last month, I was able to steal a few precious hours from the meetings and to spend them among the books in Dr. Dexter's incomparable collection in the Library of Yale University. The time, painfully short, enabled me to verify some quotations from early authorities and to add a few others from superlatively rare books. For special courtesies shown me in these libraries, my hearty thanks are extended. But the conditions under which I have done my work have made it necessary that I should depend for the most part upon my own books.

It is quite needless to acknowledge here the indebtedness of the author to those who have gone before him. That indebtedness will appear on almost every page. The method of the book is one that permits a partial acknowledgment under almost every topic; but the direct quotations credited to their proper authorities do not fully measure the debt. Perhaps those who have contributed the most toward the making of this book, and who deserve the foremost word of thanks, are the hundreds of correspondents in every part of the country who have asked these questions.

One name, however, may and should be mentioned, that of Rev. John P. Sanderson, D. D., who twice read the manuscript, and whose counsel has been of much service to the author, as it will be to his readers.

The learned Increase Mather closed the introduction to his "Disquisition on Ecclesiastical Councils" with the reflection that "In those Regions of Light and Love which are Above, there is more knowledge gained in one Day than can be obtained in an whole Age of Reading and Hard Study," and expressed the hope that, having now rendered this service to the churches, he might soon be there, and learn more about many things beside church polity. Dr. Mather was seventy-eight when he wrote his notable work, and could well expect that this might be his last work. I

am hoping to live long enough to learn much more than I now know. But I can quote with hearty concurrence the paragraph next to that which closes his introduction:

"In the subsequent Disquisition the reader will not find anything of Satyr, or indecent Reflection on the Brethren whose notions are not the same as mine. I have endeavored to confirm what I assert with Scripture, and with Arguments, and the Authority of Eminent Divines, both Ancient and Modern."

It has now and then occurred to me, while preparing this volume, that there might be some readers to whom this book would seem dangerous on account of its occasional departures from the earlier type of Congregationalism so admirably set forth by Dexter and others. To these let me say that the system contained in this volume is no newer and no more dangerous than that of Dr. Dexter was fifty years ago. Indeed, I cannot better close this preface than by quoting the paragraph with which he himself closed the preface to his Handbook.

"Without doubt some person will allege this as a new endeavor to 'control' the churches. Such an allegation will be as true—and as false—as previous intimations of the same sort have been. He who waits to be insured that his good will not be evil spoken of before doing any, will earn neither thanks for today, nor remembrance from tomorrow."

WILLIAM E. BARTON.

November 1, 1915.

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THE LAW OF CONGREGATIONAL USAGE

I. CHURCH POLITY

What is Congregational Law? The Congregational churches recognize no human authority over and above the local church as competent to legislate for it in the conduct of its internal and spiritual affairs. There is, however, a law of Congregational usage. It recognizes statute law, parliamentary law, the general content of ecclesiastical law, and the body of accepted precedent and established custom of the Congregational churches. A complete codification of this body of law can never be accomplished, for the Congregational churches recognize the law of growth as truly as the law of precedent. Both in ecclesiastical and civil affairs there is a law which is more than the sum of all particular laws. While no book of Congregational usage can ever be final or even complete, it is desirable that from time to time there be new attempts to interpret Congregational usage in the light of its development. The present volume undertakes to assemble in convenient form the general body of established rules and precedents which are accepted and now current in Congregational church government.

But that we may know what current Congregational usage is, we must often inquire how long it has been so and how it became so, and what it was before. We must avoid, if we are able, mistaking the weathercock for the compass. Our present usage is the result of changes, and other changes are yet to be made. It is always desirable, and often highly important, that we discover not merely the present position, but the direction, of progress. There is often a trend of custom which has in it a more irresistible sweep than formal legislation. We must seek to discover, therefore, by what customary methods our Congregational

churches govern themselves and administer their common work; and also in what fashion the methods of our present usage are related to the usage of the past.

This plan of study ought to have for us a value much beyond that of mere historical research, though that is of no small importance; for it should afford us some indication of what are likely to be the main lines of advance toward the future.

It is seldom if ever possible for a church truthfully to assert concerning its polity or doctrine that that which it now holds has been held, "always, everywhere and by all." Few things appear to remain in an entirely static condition, and Congregational usage makes no claim to being one of that few. But there is, and has been, a certain consistency of development—if we do not use the term too narrowly—and this constitutes, for the student of Congregational polity, the base line for a survey of what may properly be called the Law of Congregational Usage.

Laws and Law. We commonly speak of both laws and law—the English law, and the laws of England; and these terms, though not used with precision, point to two different aspects under which legal science may be approached. The laws of a country are thought of as separate, distinct, individual rules; the law of a country, however much we may analyze it into separate rules, is something more than the sum of all such rules. It is rather a whole, a system which orders our conduct; in which the separate rules have their place and their relation to each other and to the whole; which is never completely exhausted by any analysis, however far the analysis may be pushed, and however much the analysis may be necessary to an understanding of the whole.—*Geldart*: Elements of English Law, p. 7.

Congregational Law. Every association or union of persons in a company for an object implies a ground work of organization, with principles and laws; and therefore every church must have such a ground work.—*Dexter*: Congregationalism: What It Is, p. 1.

Is Reliance upon Usage Peculiar to Congregational Churches? Reliance upon usage is in nowise peculiar to Congregationalism, nor is this system of church government foremost among those that rely on precedent. It is characteristic of the administration of law in general, and by some has been thought an especial characteristic of ecclesiastical law. As a matter of fact, the religious spirit

is not more bound to precedent than the spirit of secular government. The greater part of human law is precedent. Congregationalists hold that usage is subject to growth and normal development. The recent declaration of the Dean of St. Paul's can hardly be applied to Congregationalism:

The Tyranny of Precedent. There is no such hide-bound Tory in the world as the religious spirit. It is profoundly uncomfortable if it cannot find or invent a tradition of the elders to justify every article in its creed and every detail in its worship.—*Inge*: The Church and the Age, p. 58.

The Right of Development. The Christian Church must be free at any period to adapt the fundamental principles which it derives from Christ to the exigencies of its life. . . . We shall insist in the name of the churches on absolute freedom to apply fundamental principles directly to present conditions, whatever may have been the usage of the fathers.—*Heermance*: Democracy in the Church, pp. 2, 3.

What is Church Government? The fellowship of churches expresses itself according to established forms, and develops along definite lines of progress. The authoritative expression and right interpretation of these forms in any church or body of churches constitutes for that church or body the system of its government.

Every society of men, instituted for the attainment of a common end, recognizes certain forms of action as adapted to the securing of that end, and formulates its belief in the wisdom and value of these forms of conduct in written or unwritten laws. The power which is recognized in any state, church, or other organization, as that which has the prerogative of enacting and the authority of enforcing such laws, constitutes the government.

A society without government has been the dream of theorists in many ages. These philosophical anarchists (for the term may be used without opprobrium) conceive of an ideal society in which harmony and protection might be secured without submission to law or obedience to authority in any form. Such a form of association has not proved practicable either in religious or political organizations. Therefore, in order to secure certain ends, recognized as

desirable, governments are instituted among men, in church and state. These governments differ in their forms, but in the last analysis all human governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.

Necessity of Government. Man is so constituted that government is necessary to the existence of society; and society to his existence and the perfection of his faculties.—*John C. Calhoun*: Works i: 4.

Necessity of Church Government. The house of God must have orders for the government of it, such as not any of the household but God himself hath appointed.—*Hooker*: Eccl. Polity, iii: 11.

The Parts of Church Government. Church government is considered in a double respect, either in regard of the parts of government themselves, or necessary circumstances thereof. The parts of government are prescribed in the Word, because the Lord Jesus Christ, the king and lawgiver of his Church, is no less faithful in the house of God than was Moses, who from the Lord delivered a form and pattern of government to the children of Israel in the Old Testament; and the Holy Scriptures are now also so perfect, as they are able to make the man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto every good work; and therefore doubtless to the well ordering of the house of God.—*Cambridge Platform:* i: 2.

What is Church Polity? The science of church government is called polity. Polity may be defined as the form or constitution of government of a nation, state, church, or other institution. Church polity is the aggregate of the recognized principles which lie at the foundation of the organic life of a church or body of churches considered as an organic unit.

The word polity was originally the same word as policy. The two words still are synonymous, but not identical in meaning. Policy is a plan or method of management, a scheme, or adaptation of means to a desired end. Polity is a word of more fundamental and stable implication, and applies to the structure of government, the framework by which the several parts of a system are co-ordinated and united in a consistent and harmonious unit.

The word polity is intimately akin to the word politics; but the latter is more closely confined to secular affairs, or if used in religious matters is commonly applied in a more narrow and restricted, and often in an uncomplimentary, sense. "Church politics" may be sometimes spoken of in

contempt, as of scheming and self-seeking in church affairs; and even when not used in a bad sense commonly refers to matters of contest for power or place; but "church polity" is a phrase of noble significance, as of the science of church government, the broad basis of management in church administration.

The words "polity" and "politics" are derived from the Latin *politicus*, which in turn was derived from the Greek *politeia*, whose root is *polis*, a city; and are words of government. Policy, also, may be from the same root; but is sometimes derived from the Latin *polyptycha*, account books, or registers of taxes, or from the Greek *poluptuchos*, from *polus*, many, and *ptux*, leaf; referring to the many leaves of public registers. Polity as an ecclesiastical term has a far nobler connotation than either politics or policy.

It would thus be proper to say that all the Congregational churches have a polity which is essentially the same; but that the policy of each local church is determined from time to time by that church for itself; that an ambitious man secures a coveted position by a shrewd stroke of church politics, but in defiance of the well ordered principles of church polity.

Church Polity. Of properties common to all societies Christian, it will not be denied that one of the very chiefest is ecclesiastical polity. Which word I therefore the rather use, because the name of government, as commonly men understand it in ordinary speech, doth not comprise the largeness of that whereunto in this question it is applied. . . . To our purpose therefore the name of church polity will better serve, because it containeth both government and also whatsoever besides belongeth to the ordering of the church in public.—*Hooker*: Ecclesiastical Polity, Bk. III, ch. i, sec. 14.

Ecclesiastical Polity. Ecclesiastical polity, or church government or discipline, is nothing else but that form and order that is to be observed in the Church of Christ, upon earth, both for the constitution of it, and all the administrations that therein are to be performed.—*Cambridge Platform:* i: 1.

Our Sacred Heritage in Congregational Polity. That Controversies about Forms of Ecclesiastical Discipline, concern not the Essentials of Religion, but that Good Men may be of various Sentiments about them; *Salva Fide, et Caritate*, is readily acknowledged. Nevertheless there ought to be a singular Regard unto Truths of this Nature, by us in New-England, above what may be affirmed of Men in any other Part of the World, since our Fathers were Perse-

cuted out of their Native Land, and fain to fly into the Wilderness, for their Testimony thereunto: great were the Difficulties and Temptations, and Straits, which they for some time conflicted with, and all upon no other Account, but that so they might enjoy a pure Discipline and Church state, exactly conformable to the Mind of Christ, revealed in the Holy Scriptures. On which Account, for their Posterity to depart from what their Fathers have with so much Clearness of Scripture Light, taught and practiced, and confirmed with so great Sufferings; must needs be a greater Sin and Provocation to the Eyes of his Glory, than may be said of any other People on the Face of the Earth.—*Increase Mather:* Disq. con. Eccl. Councils, i.

What are the Essential Forms of Church Government? Theoretically all church governments may be resolved into three kinds:

First: A government by one man.

Second: A government by all the people of the congregation or church.

Third: A government by more than one man and less than the whole body of the people.

These three forms may be called the monarchical, democratic, and oligarchical. They correspond to forms essentially similar in the government of the state. The threefold classification has been recognized since the time of Aristotle.

Practically, however, these definitions do not suffice. Not even the papacy is an absolute monarchy, and Congregationalism is far from being an unqualified and unlimited democracy. Modern church governments combine in themselves various elements, and may therefore be described under other terms than those of primary or theoretical organization.

A more convenient grouping for analysis and study is the following:

(1) *The Papal.* The papal form of government is one in which one man stands as the highest and foremost exponent of authority. The most prominent illustration of this type of government is that of the Church of Rome.

(2) *The Episcopal.* In the episcopal type of government the highest authority is expressed in a group of bishops, conceived of as a rank or order of the clergy higher

than that of the elders or local pastors. The most prominent example of this form of government in this country is the Protestant Episcopal Church.

(3) *The Presbyterian.* The presbyterian form of government is one in which the church is governed by the elders, or presbyters. The most important examples for our study are the Presbyterian and Methodist Episcopal churches.

The presbyterian form of government does not require a government wholly by the clergy. A part of the elders who constitute the governing body of the Presbyterian Church are "teaching elders." The Methodist Episcopal Church is episcopal in form, but not in government. The episcopate is counted to be not an order but an office, and the government is through conferences in which are both clerical and lay representatives..

(4) *The Congregational.* The Congregational form of government is that in which final authority resides in the whole body of the people. The Congregational denomination is only one of several bodies which recognize the congregational form of government. The Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Universalists, Unitarians, and, to the extent that they recognize the autonomy of the local church, the Lutherans, and all other churches in which the final authority is expressed through a vote of the membership, are congregational in government.

Like the river in the Garden of Eden that rises in one head and parts into four streams, the organic life of Christianity flows through these four main channels. Although they sometimes seem to merge into each other, they will be found sufficiently distinct for the purpose of accurate study.

Three Kinds of Government. Of political constitutions there are three kinds, and equal in number are the deflections from them, that is to say, the corruptions of them. The former are kingship, aristocracy, and that which recognizes the principle of wealth, which it seems appropriate to call timocracy, and which people commonly call constitutional government.—*Aristotle*: Ethics, Book VIII, ch. x.

Is Polity Identical with Ecclesiastical Law? Ecclesiastical law, as the term is employed in Congregational church government and generally in the United States, is not identical with polity. Ecclesiastical law is used with reference to the procedure of civil courts in ecclesiastical affairs; while polity is the system whereby churches govern themselves, or are governed by superior ecclesiastical bodies in the transaction of their own business.

What is the Relation of Polity to Creed? There is no fixed or necessary relation between any type of polity and any particular type of creed. There might be a papal form of government teaching that there is one God, and a similar form of polity combined with a creed teaching that there are many gods. The democratic or congregational type of government can be employed either by evangelical or non-evangelical churches. However, certain forms of polity tend to certain credal relations. In general, a church that is monarchical in its forms of government holds its members less rigidly to written forms of statement than a church governed by bishops; and a church whose government resides in the whole body of the people tends to a larger liberality in matters of creed subscription than a church more compactly organized.

What is the Relation Between Church Polity and Civil Government? There is no necessary and fixed relation between any one form of church polity and any particular form of civil government, except where the church exists in organic union with the state. In a democratic country like America, churches of many types of government exist in equal freedom side by side. The form and constitution of the church itself are greatly influenced by the form of government in the state, and this influence is reciprocal. When Christianity became the state religion under Constantine its form of government was greatly modified. The government of the United States and of the several states have been profoundly influenced by the democratic type of government which existed in the free churches of the col-

onies before the Declaration of Independence. King James of England was right in the assumption expressed in his epigram, "No bishop, no king." It was largely because they found it feasible to conduct the business of the church without a bishop that the Puritans counted themselves entirely competent to manage the affairs of a state without a king. The simple organization of the Pilgrim church led naturally to the Mayflower compact. First, "they threw off this anti-Christian yoke of bondage, and as the Lord's free people joined themselves into a church-estate," and then in the name of God they "organized and combined themselves into a civil body politic."

The government of the Congregational churches and of the United States are closely related, both in substance and in history. The form of government which the Pilgrims based on manhood suffrage and the authority of God in the affairs of the church they wrought also into the foundation of their republic at Plymouth Rock, whence in time it found a place in the government of the United States.

Development of Church Law. The Church saw herself confronted by a highly cultivated state, to whose law, however, she was unable to take up a consistent attitude from the beginning. Had she refused to recognize the state in every relation, she would soon have been shattered by it. Had she been able simply to acquiesce in civil government, there would have been no question of forming a legislative system of her own except to a very modest extent. Just because her relation to the state was complicated, just because she both submitted to it (Romans xiii) and opposed it (Apocalypse of John, etc.), just because she unconsciously took it as a model and yet refused to recognize it, she found herself at last possessed of a permanent legislative system corresponding to the secular system of the state.—*Harnack:* The Constitution and Law of the Church, p. 143.

Church and Civil Government Before the Reformation. Constantine and his successors in the empire, having removed from Christianity the stigma of an illicit religion, proceeded to recognize and legalize the power of the bishops over the communities under their care. The distinction, now so founded, between church government and civil government, had never been defined or discussed, and it was therefore natural for the ministers of a religion recognized and protected by the state to become in some sort and to some extent functionaire of the imperial power.—*Bacon:* Genesis of the New England Churches, p. 44.

II. THE CONGREGATIONAL PRINCIPLE

What Is the Basic Congregational Principle? The basic principle of Congregationalism is the supreme leadership of Christ and the priesthood of all believers; the autonomy of the local church; and the fellowship both of Christian brethren within the church and of the churches one with another.

While it is possible to carry definitive analysis further, it is better for practical purposes to state the principle thus, but these three principles are one.

The National Council Affirmation. We believe in the freedom and responsibility of the individual soul, and the right of private judgment. We hold to the autonomy of the local church and its independence of all ecclesiastical control. We cherish the fellowship of the churches, united in district, state and national bodies, for counsel and co-operation in matters of common concern.—Preamble to National Council Constitution, 1913.

Congregationalism. It embodies three fundamental principles: (1) that it is the right and duty of believers in Jesus Christ in every community to organize for Christian work and worship, and that such an organization is a Christian church; (2) that each such church is by right independent of all external ecclesiastical control, and in any such church all members possess equal ecclesiastical authority and that such churches owe a duty of Christian fellowship and co-operation to one another. This fellowship and co-operation is exercised among those who bear the name of Congregationalists, by means of councils, conferences, consociations, and associations.—Century Dictionary.

Principles of Congregationalism. Congregationalism is the democratic form of church order and government. It derives its name from the prominence which it gives to the congregation of Christian believers. It vests all ecclesiastical power (under Christ) in the associated brotherhood of each local church, as an independent body. At the same time it recognizes a fraternal and equal fellowship between these independent churches, which invests each with the right and duty of advice and reproof, and even of the public withdrawal of that fellowship in case the course pursued by another of the sisterhood should demand such action for the preservation of its own purity and consistency. Herein Congregationalism, as a system, differs from Independency; which affirms the seat of ecclesiastical power to reside in the brotherhood so zealously as to ignore any check, even of advice, upon its action. Still, as this difference is only one of the exaggeration of a first principle, it follows that every Independent church is Congregational, though few Congregational churches are Independent—in this strict and Brownist sense.—*Dexter:* Congregationalism, pp. 1, 2.

The Ideal of Congregationalism. Its ideal is that the Church should be the organized expression of the creative will of Christ, as revealed to believers in devotional and deliberative fellowship. The aim of a Congregational church, in ultimate definition, is to give effect, throughout the entire field of its activities, to that supreme and sovereign principle. So that, "when the Church reaches its ideal perfection, the acts of the Church are the acts of Christ, and what it binds on earth is bound in heaven, and what it looses on earth is loosed in heaven." Those are the words of Dr. Dale, and it is significant that in his application of that principle he lays stress, not upon the right of every man to share in the government of the Church, but upon the responsibility of each to secure in the discipline, doctrine, and worship of the Church the supremacy of its Divine Founder and Lord. So long as we effectively ensure the living headship of Christ and the responsibility of believers to discover the living will of Christ, polity may be safely regarded as subsidiary and revisable.—*Meredith Davis:* Congregationalism and Its Ideal, Constructive Quarterly, September, 1905, pp. 550, 551.

What Is the Priesthood of all Believers? The priesthood of all believers is the great charter of the Christian faith. It has its authority in the profoundly significant words of Christ, "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret."

The inherent right of every Christian soul to approach God directly is the most precious truth of Christianity. Whatever room there is for priestly intercession must be made without trespassing on this fundamental and indefeasible right of every soul to approach within the holy of holies and draw near to the throne of grace. In Jesus Christ the temple veil is rent in twain. In the vision of John in the Apocalypse the Ark of the Covenant is in plain sight of the congregation of Christian worshippers. Priesthood as a usurpation of the right to thrust a system between God and the soul has no rightful place in Christianity.

This priesthood of believers enthrones Christ as the only Lord of the Church, and carries with it as a corollary the spiritual equality of brethren in Christ. The fundamental law of Congregationalism is the supreme authority of Christ.

The Lordship of Christ. During the rise of English Independ-

ency in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the question that is chiefly to the fore is the higher constitution of the Church as distinct from its administrative regulations. Without dealing in detail with the views of the various leaders, we may summarize their main contentions as being:

(a) That the Lord Jesus Christ is alone the Head of the Church and that the administrative finality of the state in church affairs was a practical violation of that.

(b) That the governance of Christ in the life of the Church was a perfectly practicable ideal and alone ensured validity to its procedure.

(c) That membership of the Church was a personal and not a parochial matter, and that therefore there could be no integration into the Body of Christ except through individual confession of faith.

Those were the primary and creative principles, though they were soon followed with corollaries affirming local independence and democratic franchise (based on Christocratic control) and eventually separation of Church and State. And the tragic vein in Independent history is that these corollaries have obscured and largely displaced the cardinal and creative principles. Hence the familiar misconception that Congregationalism is "democracy applied to church affairs," against which Dr. Dale so frequently protested. Hence also the mistranslation of spiritual autonomy into an exaggerated separatism, involving not only severance from the state but isolation from churches of its own order. These extravagancies must be read not only as declensions from the classic ideal, but as proof that the Nonconformist spirit had not found fitting and final institutional form.—*Meredith Davis:* Congregationalism and Its Ideal, Constructive Quarterly, September, 1915, pp. 550, 551.

Robert Browne's Declaration. Because euerie one of the Church is made a King, a Priest, and a prophet vnder Christ, to uphold and further the Kingdom of God, & to break and destroy the Kingdome of Antichrist and Sathan. How are all Christians made Priestes vnder Christ? They present and offer vp praires unto God, for them selves & for others. They turne others from iniquitie, so that attonement is made in Christ unto justification. In them also and for them others are sanctified, by partaking the graces of Christ vnto them.—*Robert Browne:* A Book Which Showeth the Life, etc.

The Sacredness of Personality. It is, indeed, difficult to state the truth of this principle in any unexceptionable form as a logical proposition. A certain doctrine and spirit of Christian individualism is, however, an unmistakable characteristic of our polity. The roots of this principle of a just individualism lie deep down and far back. They are as far back in the Bible as the primitive utterance in which God says, "Let us make man in our image"; or the covenant of Mosaism, which gives to each of the followers of Jehovah the title of priest and king. This principle is, however, as far as possible from a declaration of contemptuous disregard of influence, or even authority (if you will use the word in its modified meaning), within the Church of Christ. The Lord's

bondman is no man's bondman, though he should be servant of all. Every Christian, however unlearned and weak, stands in essentially the same relations with every other, however wise and strong.—*Ladd:* Church Polity, p. 49.

How to Know the Will of Christ. In every Christian church the will of Christ is the supreme authority. But how are we to know the will of Christ? The early Puritans and Congregationalists insisted on the production of definite authority from the Holy Scriptures in support of every detail of church organization and of every church rule and practice. Unless a church office or custom had the explicit sanction either of a scriptural precept or of apostolic example, they condemned it as unlawful. They applied the same rigid test to the forms and circumstances of Christian worship. It was a noble and, perhaps, a necessary error. In endeavoring to correct the enormous abuses and corruptions which had paralyzed the divine forces of the Church and obscured the glory of Christian worship—abuses and corruptions which had become inveterate by the usage of many centuries, and which were supported by the whole force of the Church and the State—they were driven to this incessant and exclusive appeal to the Holy Scriptures. But the principle was false. The Church of Christ is not under the bondage of the "letter"; it has the freedom of the Spirit.—*Dale:* Congregational Manual, pp. 38, 39.

What Is the Autonomy of the Local Church? The principle involved in the autonomy of the local church is the authority of each local congregation to govern itself, in all matters relating to its own internal administration, in a spirit of Christian love and fellowship.

Local Autonomy. If precedent goes for anything, if John Cotton and John Wilson and John Winthrop knew what they meant when they talked of a Congregational church, they meant a church which was wholly independent in its relations to other churches, of which the individual members even were wholly independent in their approach to God. They really believed that all their church members were kings and priests. This was no poetical formula to be tucked out of sight whenever it was desirable to have it in the closet. It was the theory of religion in which these men lived and moved and had their being.—*Edward Everett Hale:* Unitarianism and Original Congregationalism, p. 5.

Local Church Independent. Its constitutive principle is the independence under Christ of each fully constituted Church of Christ, or the autonomy under Christ of every local congregation of believers duly organized. This church independence is the principle which makes Congregationalism what it is. It governs all its institutions and determines all questions that arise touching order. And we mean by independence here the right and duty under Christ of each fully constituted local church to manage its own affairs, elect and ordain all its officers, administer its discipline, and determine its mode of fellowship, without external accountability and control, but in harmony with the fellowship of unity in the kingdom of heaven.—*Ross:* Church Kingdom, p. 80.

The Ecclesia Is Autonomous. The brotherhood is the government. As the ecclesia of Athens was the sovereign assembly, and Pericles or Demosthenes only reasoned with it, convinced it, and so led it, the Christian ecclesia, with Christ in the midst, is her own authority. Even the greatest of her members, Augustine, Luther, or Wesley, is only able to lead by the suasion of truth and the gift of the Spirit. The autonomy of the congregation in the New Testament is surprising, both on account of the poor materials of which the church was composed, and also because the Apostles, fresh from the experience of Christ, and endued with the Holy Spirit, were yet present, and might have seemed entitled to override this independence. But, in the case of Paul, at any rate (in the case of the Twelve our information is defective), the apostolic authority was only used to elicit and establish the congregational independence. In no case are officers or ministers appointed without the consent of the congregation. If there is doubt whether the church elected, it is certain that it showed its approbation. A decree made by the Twelve at Jerusalem was valid only because it was issued "with the whole church" (Acts xv: 22). The discipline was exercised by the whole church assembled in the name of Jesus; the apostolic authority was present only as a spirit of counsel and support. The men who were called upon to exercise this sovereign function of government, legislative and administrative, were morally ill-developed; tainted with heathenism, they with difficulty escaped from their past. But it does not occur to the Apostles to delay their franchise until they are full grown, until they can be fed on meat and not merely on milk. Rather, as in political training generally, the power to exercise the functions of government, the responsibility of decision and action can be acquired only by practice.—*Horton:* The Early Church, pp. 142, 143.

An Early Declaration. Every true visible church is a company of people called and separated from the world by the word of God and joyned together by voluntary profession of the faith of Christ in the fellowship of the Gospel. Being thus joyned, every Church hath power in Christ to take unto themselves meet and sufficient persons into the offices and functions of Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Deacons and Helpers as those whom Christ hath appointed in his Testament.—Platform of the London-Amsterdam Church, 1596.

What Is the Principle of Christian Fellowship? The principle of Christian fellowship as interpreted by Congregationalists involves the fellowship of individual Christians within the local church and the fellowship of churches united for the purpose of advice and counsel, or for the doing of their common work.

The principle of fellowship has been so often neglected in Congregationalism in the over-emphasis of local autonomy that some writers have sought to rectify this mistake

by a compensating over-emphasis of fellowship. Thus Dr. George M. Boynton in his interesting work on "The Congregational Way" speaks of fellowship as "the sole Congregational principle," but this can hardly be defended save by an elasticity of terms which makes it include the rest of the Congregational principle.

Dr. Boynton's Single Principle. It has been common to speak of two principles as being equally fundamental to Congregationalism, independence and fellowship. They have been called the two foci of the Congregational ellipse. But we are disposed to consider that Congregationalism is a more perfect form of church organization than can be symbolized by the ellipse, and to regard fellowship as its one central principle. For fellowship can only exist in its truest and most perfect form between those who are mutually independent.—The Congregational Way, p. 9.

The London Confession. And although the particular congregations be distinct and severall bodies, every one as a compact and Knit Citie within itselfe, yet are they all to walke by one rule of truth; So also they (by all means convenient) and to have the counsell and helpe one of another, if necessitie require it, as members of one body, in the common faith, under Christ their head.—1646.

Boston Platform. Although churches are distinct, and therefore may not be confounded one with another; and equal, and therefore have not dominion one over another; yet all the churches ought to preserve church communion one with another, because they are all united to Christ as integral parts of his one Catholic Church, militant against the evil that is in the world, and visible in the profession of the Christian faith, in the observance of the Christian sacraments, in the manifestation of the Christian life, and in the worship of the one God of our salvation, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.—1865. (Dr. Quint stated that this section was from the pen of Dr. Leonard Bacon.—*Dunning:* Congregationalists, p. 490.)

What Is Congregationalism? Congregationalism is that system of church organization which recognizes the equal rights of all believers, the independence and autonomy of the local church, and the association of the churches through voluntary organizations devised for fellowship and co-operation, but without ecclesiastical authority. These principles are not now held exclusively by the body known as Congregational, but have grown to increasing recognition in other bodies also. Still, these cardinal points of church government are the peculiar heritage of the body which bears the Congregational name. The name was not

chosen at the outset, nor was it the intent of the founders to select a name. In the beginning of the movement in America the churches were known simply as "The Church of Christ in Plymouth," or "in Boston," or "in Salem"; and as the churches increased they were designated as First or Second, or by their streets or locations. But as denominations multiplied, and to avoid confusion, these churches in which the final appeal was to the membership took the name of Congregational.

The Congregational Theory. The Congregational theory of the Christian Church is that the kingdom of heaven, being itself one, has but one normal manifestation, or natural development, which appears first in individual churches, equal in origin, rights, functions, and duties, which are consequently independent one of another in matters of control; then in associations of churches without authority by which the fraternity and unity of all Christians are expressed and the churches co-operate in Christian labors, all being subject to Christ alone and to his revealed will. It shuns independency on the one hand, with which it is sometimes confounded, and on the other hand the exercise of authority by associated churches. It also avoids all ministerial or prelatical rule.—*Ross:* The Church Kingdom, p. 79.

Manhood and Machinery. One definition of Congregationalism is that it is that polity which puts least in the way of machinery—of rites, symbols, functionaries—between the individual soul and God.—*Dexter:* Congregationalism as Seen in Its Literature, p. 714.

Denominational Ideals. No denomination is perfectly homogeneous in its thought or aspiration. But in a striking degree Congregationalists are at one in their emphasis upon such ideals as these:

1. *Wide Liberty.* Thought, speech and action are unshackled. Reliance is placed upon the Spirit of God, the power of the Gospel of Christ and the sound instincts of regenerated lives for maintaining a pure, faithful and united church.

2. *Close Fellowship.* Realizing the weakness of isolated units, Congregationalism urges each individual to seek closest relation with his fellows and each church to seek the counsel of other churches, and to join with them in common tasks. It seeks also co-operative relation with other bodies and the ultimate unity of the Church of Christ.

3. *Thoroughgoing Democracy.* Congregationalism has no gradation of church courts, no inner circle of authority. Its ministers are members of the churches they serve. Their credentials are in the keeping of groups of churches. There is no place for the politician or the aristocrat. Autocracy, aristocracy and plutocracy are not at home in Congregationalism. It seeks to look beyond the incidents to the essentials of life.

4. *Emphasis upon Knowledge.* Congregationalism welcomes truth

from whatever source drawn, and is confident that every interest of the Kingdom of God will profit by enlargement of knowledge. It finds in Christian history the assurance that the future will not call for change in the central affirmation of the universal Church concerning the relation of God in Christ. But it stands ready to reshape its thought and life as the unfolding of the will and mind of God shall demand.

5. *The Exalting of Character.* This is the complement of the last-named ideal. It called for a rational religion. This calls for an ethical religion. Reverent rationality and religious morality are the finest fruitage of the Christian Church.—*Hubert C. Herring,* in pamphlet, Matters Congregational, 1915.

What Is the Significance of the Term Congregational? The term Congregational began to be used as an adjective rather than a proper name. It was descriptive of a form of government which recognized the ultimate authority of the congregation. John Cotton, first pastor of the First Church of Boston, issued a series of discussions on church government, in which he freely spoke of "the Congregational way." Richard Mather and other early New England ministers used the word. The question whether the term Congregational should be used only as a descriptive adjective and not as a proper name was carefully considered by the National Council in Boston in 1865, where a committee, of which Rev. A. H. Quint was chairman, reported an answer to the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational ministers in part, as follows:

The Affirmation of 1865. Our denomination is the same with that of the first churches of New England. We trace back our lineage in an uninterrupted line to that period. The same fellowship has been perpetuated, based upon a particular system of doctrines and polity, to which we now hold. The denomination which we represent has thus had a distinct and recognized existence, as clear as history can make any historical fact, by all requisite limitations and declarations. This denomination has always had the distinctive name of Congregational churches. It is needless to quote authorities; for, from the days of John Cotton, the name Congregational was used to designate a particular denomination, of a faith well defined and now unchanged, as well as a peculiar polity. Nor did any others, so far as we can learn, though holding the same polity, assume that name while not belonging to this denomination. This distinctive denominational name is still our heritage from the fathers.—Minutes of the National Council of 1865, p. 246.

How Early Was the Name Congregational Used? The

Cambridge Synod of 1648 not only defines the government of a Congregational church but distinctly repudiates the name Independent. The term which had been used in earlier literature received at this first of all general gatherings of the New England churches an official sanction.

The Earliest Uses of the Name. Mr. C. W. Ernst of Boston furnished the article "Congregational" to the Oxford New English Dictionary. The earliest examples he found of the use of the word as a proper name were in Richard Mather's "Church Government" (1639), J. Ball's "Answer to Caune" (1642), Baillie's "Letters and Journals" (1644), and a Resolution of the House of Commons (23 January, 1644). Mr. Ernst wrote me in 1901 bidding me look out for earlier instances, but I have found none.—Letter of Rev. William H. Cobb, Librarian of Congregational Library.

In the Cambridge Platform. The state, the members of the Militant visible church walking in order, was either before the law Economical, that is in families; or under the law National; or, since the coming of Christ only Congregational; (The term Independent wee approve not) therefore neither national, provincial, nor classical. A Congregational Church is by the institution of Christ a part of the Militant-visible-church, consisting of a company of saints by calling, united into one body by a holy covenant.—ii, 5-6.

In the Time of Cromwell. The term Congregational came into general use about the time of the great civil war in England, and contemporaneously in New England, as descriptive of a form of church polity in which the local congregation is the unit of organization, and the source of ecclesiastical government (e. g., Richard Mather, An Apologic, London, 1643 [written 1639], p. 6, and generally in the literature of succeeding years.) . . . The term Independency was attached to the system at about the same time as that of Congregationalism (in 1642), and though an object of yearly protest (e. g., An Apologeticall Narration, p. 23), long remained its usual designation in Great Britain, though it is now generally supplanted by "Congregationalism." In America it was never in use. Congregationalist as a title of the adherents of the polity is encountered in 1692 (Cotton Mather, Blessed Unions, Boston): and "Congregationalism" in 1716 (Increase Mather, Disquisitions on Eccl. Councils, Boston, p. vi).—*Williston Walker:* Art. Congregationalism, in Hasting's Dict. Relig. and Ethics.

The Word Congregation. I do not find the word Congregational as describing a church in early English history, but there are plenty of instances where the word congregation is used to describe a church. Dale's "History of English Congregationalism," page 19, quotes from a document of the thirteenth century, describing a company of foreigners who arrived in England about the year 1160 and maintained that the church is "a congregation of men and women." Dale also quotes Strype's "Memorials," "the congregation in Kent who went over unto the congregation in Essex to instruct and to join with them." The exiles in Amsterdam

describe in their supplication to King James "a congregation as absolutely independent and possessing all the powers which Christ has conferred on his church." Henry Jacob, in 1709, speaks of "those particular congregations as essentially true churches of God." John Robinson, in 1624, wrote in the name of the Leyden Church "to the Church of Christ in London," answering their question "whether Mr. Jacob's Congregation be a true Church or no." The Bishop of Exeter, in 1631, wrote to Archbishop Laud: "I hear to my grief that there are eleven Congregations as they call them," etc.

The "Congregational way" was the term used by the five dissenting brethren in the Westminster Assembly and I suppose the title Congregationalist arose from the need of a word to distinguish that body from Presbyterians, but this of course was in John Cotton's time.

John Davenport, in 1645, wrote a tract entitled "The Power of Congregational Churches." Thomas Hooker's "Summary of Principles" includes one which was "a Church Congregational is the first subject of the keys."—Letter of Rev. Albert E. Dunning, D. D., author of Congregationalists in America.

Increase Mather's Use of the Terms Congregational, Congregationalist, and Congregationalism. It has been injurious to those of the Congregational persuasion that the name of Brownists has been imposed upon them, from whom they differ essentially. . . . Congregationalists are of quite another spirit and principle. . . . They are the genuine posterity of the good Old Puritan Nonconformists. . . . There was long since an admirable little book (little in bulk but great in worth) printed with the title "Puritanismus Anglicanus." It is perfect Congregationalism.—Disquisition concerning Eccl. Councils, Boston reprint of 1870, pp. 4, 5.

Why Were Congregationalists Called Brownists? Congregationalists were sometimes nicknamed Brownists, after Robert Browne, an early and heroic, though erratic, Congregationalist. For the advocacy of the principles which had large influence in shaping Congregational polity, he was repeatedly imprisoned by Episcopalians in England and Presbyterians in Scotland, being sometimes confined in dungeons in which he could not see his hand at noon. Neither Robert Browne nor any of his associates or followers accepted the name Brownist.

The Father of Congregationalism. Robert Browne is so called not because he founded the first Congregational church, for there were others earlier; not because he was the leader of the first enduring Congregational society, for the one he founded died; but because, not being bothered by experience, he drew up a program and a constitution in which he set forth abiding characteristics of polity.—*Vernon:* Southworth Lectures.

John Robinson's Protest. Another thing hee, John Robinson, commended to us, was that wee should use all meanes to avoid and shake off the name of Brownist, being a meer nickname and brand to make Religion Odious.—*Winslow:* Hypocrisie Unmasked.

Is Congregationalism a Modern Religion? Congregationalists do not admit that theirs is a modern system of church government. They hold that the New Testament teaches that cases of discipline under the apostles were decided "by the majority" (I Cor. 5:4, II Cor. 2:6, margin), and that Christ's only direction for church government provided a specific course of discipline whose last appeal was to the local church (Matt. 18:18). They affirm that the New Testament knew no series of ranks in the ministry, with priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals and popes, but that every pastor was a bishop, and that the two words, bishop and presbyter, occur in such relations to each other as to show with remarkable clearness that the two offices were one. In this opinion they are sustained by such scholars as Martin Luther, Arminius, John Calvin, Dean Alford, Pope Urban II, and a multitude of other scholars of all the leading denominations. Indeed, while no opinion can be said to be undisputed, even by names of weight, there is probably no question concerning the government of the early church about which there is more general agreement of scholars than that the two offices of the early church were those of presbyter, or minister, and deacon, and that local congregations were self-governing.

Congregational Antiquity. Congregationalists are the only lineal descendants of the Apostles. They do not claim that their polity can be traced back historically, by an unbroken chain, to the apostolic age. That cannot be done by any denomination. But they do claim a historical connection with the Apostles on the ground of a oneness of principles.—*Dorus Clarke:* Orthodox Congregationalism and the Sects, p. 32.

How Did Congregationalism Reach America? Modern Congregationalism in America came to us by way of Plymouth Rock and the Mayflower. An interesting and important development of its life appeared somewhat more

than three hundred years ago, in the organization of the church at Scrooby, in England, in 1606. It was this church that, being persecuted with incredible cruelty for no other reason than the determination of its members to worship God in the simple and orderly manner of their church, migrated to Holland in 1607-08, whence a dozen years later a portion of the same church came to America in the Mayflower. Their church organization in 1606, which serves in some sort as a pattern for modern Congregational churches, and their organization of a free government in 1620, to which our national government is deeply indebted, rested on no disputable succession, no unholy alliance of recreant and apostate church with truckling and corrupt state, no assumed divine right of kings, or sacerdotal magic, but on the inherent right of manhood, guided by the Spirit of God, and animated by righteous aims.

One of the most interesting and significant facts in the life of the Pilgrim community that later settled in Plymouth is the calm and undisputed assurance which they had of their right, as the people of God, to organize a church with full authority to do all that any church could do, and later to establish a state with trial by jury, and the right to enact and execute just laws—not even excepting the right to inflict capital punishment—to declare war, and to enter into treaties. The account of both these organizations is contained in the Bradford manuscript, the first apparently in the year 1606, and the other under date of November 11, Old Style, 1620. The earlier of these two immortal records reads:

The Pilgrim Church. So many therefore of these proffessors as saw ye evill of these things, in these parts, and whose harts ye Lord had touched with heavenly zeal for his trueth, they shooke of this yoake of antichristian bondage, and as ye Lord's free people, joyned them selves (by a covenant of the Lord) into a church estate, in ye fellowship of ye gospell, to walke in all his wayes, made known or to be made known to them, according to their best endeavours, whatever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them. And that it cost them something this ensewing historie will declare.

In the organization of this and similar churches, they asked no authority from any king, pope or bishop. As "the Lord's free people" they created a church, and obtained their authority direct from God.

It is no accident that records the church organization first and the organization of the civil body later. The common phrase which speaks of "civil and religious liberty" inverts the historic order. Religious liberty came first, and civil liberty grew out of it.

In quite as dignified a manner, and one as free from any question of their inherent right as that which characterized their church organization, they organized their state, not as a poor substitute for royal authority, but as something "as firme as any patent" from the Crown, "and in some respects more sure."

The Pilgrim State. I shall a little returne backe and begine with a combination made by them before they came ashore, being ye first foundation of their governmente in this place; occasioned partly by ye discontented and mutinous speeches that some of the strangers amongst them had let fall from them in ye ship—That when they came ashore they would use their own libertie; for none had power to command them, the patente they had being for Virginia, and not for New-england, which belonged to an other Government, with which ye Virginia Company had nothing to doe. And partly that shuch an acte by them done (this their condition considered) might be as firme as any patent, and in some respects more sure.

The forme was as followeth:

In ye name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyall subjects of our dread soveraigne Lord, King James, by ye grace of God, of Great Britaine, Franc, & Ireland king, defender of ye faith, & c., haveing undertaken, for ye glorie of God, and advancemente of ye Christian faith, and honour of our king & countrie, a voyage to plant ye first colonie in ye Northerne parts of Virginia, doe by these presents solemnly & mutualy in ye presence of God, and one of another, covenant & combine our selves together into a civill body politick, for our better ordering & preservation & furtherance of ye ends aforesaid; and by vertue hearof to enacte, constitute, and frame such just & equall lawes, ordinances, acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete & convenient for ye generall good of ye Colonie unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape-Codd ye 11. of November, in ye year of ye raigne of our soveraigne lord, King James, of England, Franc, & Ireland ye

eighteenth, and of Scotland ye fiftie fourth. Ano: Dom. 1620.—Bradford's Journal.

All the Men Signed the Compact. The compact did not establish representative government. That was to come later, and was something familiar to all Englishmen. It was not the beginning of representative government on this continent; that had taken place the year before, when the Virginia burgesses were summoned by the Governor in accordance with the terms of a charter prepared in England. The men in the Mayflower were called to their task by no governor, and their compact was not drawn in England, but here. It was the voluntary and original act of those who signed it, and it embodied two great principles or ideas. The first was that the people themselves joined in making the compact each with the other. The second principle was that this agreement thus made was the organic law or constitution, to be changed only in great stress and after submission to the entire body politic and with the utmost precaution. The force and worth of this great conception have been attested since by almost countless constitutions of governments, both at home and abroad. Under that theory of government we have preserved the sober liberty, freedom and ordered liberty which have been the glory of the Republic. The little company of the Mayflower, pathetic in their weakness and suffering, imposing and triumphant in what they did, has belonged to the ages these many years. The work they wrought has endured, and we would not barter their inheritance for the heritage of kings. But that which was greatest in their work was the conception of the organic law embodied in the compact, a conception full of wisdom and patience, prefiguring a commonwealth in which order and progress were to go hand in hand.—*Henry Cabot Lodge:* Address at Dedication of Pilgrim Monument, Princeton, 1910.

Free Civil Government the Logical Result of Free Church Government. Although the signing of that compact was a sudden act, caused by the refusal of the captain of the Mayflower on the day before to take his vessel through the dangerous shoals which lie off the southeastern coast of Massachusetts and so bring it to the Hudson River, where the English charter obtained by the Pilgrims before leaving Leyden authorized them to establish their colony, it was an act which the whole experience of their church in England and in Holland and the essence of the doctrines taught by their pastor and elders naturally though unexpectedly led up to. They had been trained to disregard all authority which they had not themselves instituted or accepted, and they had also become accustomed to co-operative action for the common good. Indeed, the whole doctrine and the method of co-operative good-will cannot be better stated today than it was stated by Robinson and Bradford in 1618 in one of their five reasons for the proposed emigration from Holland to America: "We are knit together in a body in a most strict and sacred bond and covenant of the Lord, of the violation hereof we make great conscience, and by virtue whereof we do hold ourselves straightly tied to care of each other's good and of the whole by every one, and so mutually." Everything that is good in modern socialism is contained in that single sentence, with nothing of the bad or foolish.—*President C. W. Eliot:* Address at Dedication Pilgrim Monument at Princeton, 1910.

The Pilgrim Government. There was a state without king or nobles; there was a church without a bishop.—*Rufus Choate:* Life and Writings, i: 379.

Fidelity to Pilgrim Principles. Our Fathers fled into this Wilderness from the face of a Lording Episcopacy and Human Injunctions in the worship of God. Now, if any of us their Children should yield unto, or be Instrumental to set up in this Country, any of the Ways of Men's Invention, such as Prelacy, imposed Liturgies, Human Ceremonies in the Worship of God, or to admit Ignorant and Scandalous Persons to the Lord's Table; This would be a backsliding indeed! It would be a Backsliding to the Things which we and our Fathers have departed from, and have openly testified against, to be not of God.—*John Higginson:* Sermon, 27 May, 1663.

What Does Congregationalism Stand for? Congregationalism stands for a representative democracy. It believes in liberty, with all its attendant risks, as safer than sacerdotal rule. It holds that, great as are the perils of freedom, in the long run it is safer to trust the people than the priests or the politicians. But, on the other hand, it stands for such united effort of affiliated churches as may best promote the preservation of the ministry from deterioration, the protection of the churches from disorder and scandal, and the co-operation of the churches for missionary and philanthropic effort.

Consistently with these ideals it has been a foremost denomination in the planting of educational institutions. When Boston was only six years old, Harvard College was founded with the intent now inscribed on the university gates, to provide an educated ministry. And a constellation of colleges shining out all over the continent owe their origin directly or indirectly to the influence of these ideals. Congregationalism stands also for a thoughtful and intelligent laity, and for the elevation of the body of the people in character and power. It holds that democracy is safe only in so far as righteousness characterizes the body of the people, and could wish with Moses that all the people of the Lord were prophets.

It stands also for a hopeful and aggressive type of missionary effort. The oldest foreign missionary society in America—the American Board—has celebrated its centen-

nial with manifest tokens of divine favor, and of growing power among the nations of the earth.

Congregationalism has always stood for good citizenship. It influenced profoundly the shaping of the ideals of the American nation, and bequeathed to the state the freedom which it had established in the church. It still stands for no alliance between church and state, but for the governing of the state by an intelligent democracy, a government of the people, by the people and for the good of the people.

Democratic Responsibility. Developed American democracy rests on two truths—one theoretical, the other practical—first, that the rights and powers of government reside in the individual citizens; second, that society will be better governed by allowing individuals as far as possible to govern themselves. The active participation of all citizens in the affairs of the government generates knowledge, capacity and public spirit. Our government is, as far as possible, distributed, rather than centralized as in France, because we thus bring out the individual by putting on him a certain responsibility for the government.—*Heermance:* Democracy in the Church, p. 93.

Was Congregationalism Originally Democratic? Congregationalism is an evolution. Its original leaders did not believe in democracy, but the root of the matter was in them, and the principles which they adopted and for which they suffered made ultimate democracy inevitable. When democracy came, it came through Congregationalism.

The First American Democrat. John Wise, in his "Vindication of the New England Churches," published in 1717, takes a great stride (seventy years) in advance of the times, and boldly advocates the legitimacy of democracy and republics, both in civil and ecclesiastical government. He shows that it is agreeable to the law of nature, and that nothing but ill-nature is ever necessary to transform a monarch into a tyrant. He shows, both by theory and examples, how it may be made both a just and efficient government, and how the cause of true piety has always flourished most where this divinely constituted ecclesiastical government has been maintained, besides instancing many cases where God has blessed it in a civil government.—*Cummings:* Dict. Democracy.

John Robinson's Democracy. It should seem, then, that it appertains to the people, . . . unto the people primarily, under Christ, to rule and govern the church.—*John Robinson:* Works, iii, 34.

The People Rule. The whole power of government, and all acts thereto pertaining, are, by divine ordinance, in *foro externo*, to be

determined by the most voices in and of every particular congregation.—Letter of Puritan Minister of England to Gen. Assembly of Scotland, 1641.

The Primitive Church Democratic. The popular government of the primitive church pervaded their ecclesiastical polity throughout.—*Coleman:* Church Without a Bishop, p. 108.

Did Congregationalists Believe in Religious Liberty?

The first Congregationalists did not fully understand the principles of religious liberty. They made many and sad mistakes before they came fully to the discovery of what was logically involved in their own principles; but religious liberty became inevitable under the Congregational system, and the Congregationalists stand fast in the liberty in which they were born and which their fathers obtained at a great price.

Congregational Democracy. The nearest approach to democracy was found northeast of the Hudson River, in the colonies of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. . . . The original emigrants to Massachusetts were Congregationalists. They looked upon members of any other sect as men of doubtful character, not to be trusted with the administration of a growing commonwealth. Woe to the Episcopalian who held that his Lares and Penates were as good politically as those of his Congregational brother! During the earlier years of the history of Massachusetts the charter required that the freemen should be godly; and the Puritan founders of the colony doubted very gravely whether the Thirty-nine Articles were a sufficiently acceptable road to godliness to make it wise to trust the Episcopalian with the franchise. Even when the franchise itself had been more liberally bestowed and political power had thus become diffused through the whole body of freeholders, the spirit of social exclusiveness remained almost unchanged. For a great deal of the work of New England society centered around the church rather than the state; and the church was controlled by the descendants of the original settlers.—*Prof. Arthur T. Hadley:* Undercurrents in American Politics, pp. 4-5.

Congregationalism and Religious Freedom. It is the glory of Congregationalism to have taken up the struggle for religious freedom when Anabaptism failed. To it does not belong the glory of conceiving a free church, untrammeled by all connection with the state. To that idea the Baptists have always been truer than we. But what the Anabaptists failed to do in Europe, Congregationalists accomplished in America. They were the chief influence in bringing about a civilization which is really chiseled on the lines of freedom, and in which religion has, as nowhere else, its proper and efficient place.

This great service to religion and mankind Congregationalists performed to their own despite. There was that in their principles

which forced them to a free church, in which at the outset they did not believe. The Congregationalists were at one with their countrymen in upholding the idea of a state church; they only insisted that the state authorities execute the mandates of the Scripture on church polity, which were as clear to them as they have at last become to the vast majority of modern scholars.

Yet notwithstanding this colossal mistake of tying church and state together, Congregationalism succeeded eventually in establishing a free church in America which is more influential and more thoroughgoing in its freedom than that of the other free churches of the world. And it did more than that. For not only are church and state separated in America as in no other Christian nation, save perhaps most recently in France, but no matter how strict the connectionalism of some of the denominations may be, the individual church is regarded in this country as the real seat of power. —*Vernon:* Southworth Lectures, 1914.

Did Congregationalists Separate Church and State? The first Congregationalists did not adopt in full the principle of a separation between church and state. The government of the New England colonies under Congregational rule was a theocracy, but the complete separation came inevitably, and to that separation as well as to the Christianizing of the spirit of the state, Congregationalism has made its very important contribution.

Equality in Church and State. We might say that two legal fictions were latent in this action of the Pilgrims. First, that all men are created equal, with equal rights and powers. The doctrine of the common priesthood of believers had found its legal expression in their democratic church. They were now broadening this doctrine and applying it in the political sphere. As men were equal before God, they were equal before the law, and competent to frame and administer civil institutions, "without tarrying for any." Unconsciously, and with many practical reservations as the years went on, the New England colonists built upon this principle of inherent political equality. As has been said of the later explicit declaration of it, in 1776, though false in an absolute sense, it was true in this sense, that our political institutions are unworkable on any other theory.—*Heermance:* Democracy in the Church, p. 87.

A Prophetic Declaration in 1582. Yet may they (the magistates) doo nothing concerning the church, but onlie ciuilie, and as ciuile magistrates they have not that aucthoritie over the Church as to be Prophets or Priestes or Spirituall Kings, as they are Magistrates over the same, but onlie to rule the Common-wealth in all outward justice, to maintain the right welfare and honour thereof, with outward power, bodily punishment, and ciuil forcing of men. And therefore also because the Church is a Commonwealth, it is of their charge; that is, concerning the outward prouision and outward iustice, they are to look to it; but to compel religion, to plant churches by power, or to force a submission by

laws and penalties, belongeth not to them, neither yet to the Church. Let vs not therefore tarie for the Magistrates. If they be not Christians, should the welfare of the Church or the saluation of men hang on their courtesie?—*Robert Browne:* Reformation Without Tarying for Anie.

What Is the Doctrinal Emphasis of Congregationalism? Doctrinally, Congregationalism stands for orthodoxy with liberty. It holds to no one man-made creed as of perpetual authority. It rejoices in the right of the churches from time to time to compare their faith with the essential faith of the past, and has repeatedly declared itself in essential accord with the historic symbols of Christendom. But it holds to the right of men to be wiser tomorrow than they are today, and to revise all creeds, and to use them as a testimony rather than as a test; believing in the immortal words of the Pilgrim pastor, John Robinson, that God has much more light to break from His Word. Hence Congregationalists hold reverently to the final authority of the Word of God in all matters of faith and conduct; and they hold co-ordinate with this faith a belief in the right of the Church from time to time to place itself on record in the language of its own time and on doctrines of current interest. Deep-rooted in the faith of the past, and seeking to grow upward and outward toward God and the need of the world, the Congregationalists of today face the future with that faith in the Spirit of God in their own efforts, and in the better life of tomorrow, which the Pilgrims expressed as their final and best reason for coming to America, that they might do something to advance the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ in the world.

The Older Confessions. With regard to the Westminster and Savoy Confessions, which were formally adopted by the early New England churches, and which are still esteemed by us as systems of truth, they have never had the authority of standards with us, as some have supposed. They originated in England. They were consented to "for substance of doctrine" by the New England churches, for the sake of declaring their doctrinal agreement with Christians on the other side of the water, from which some had accused them of departing.—*Mitchell:* Guide, pp. 55-56.

Is Congregationalism an Arbitrary System? Congrega-

tionalism is sanctioned common sense. Within its administration, the thing that ought to be done can be done. There is a decent and orderly way of finding what the local church wants to do within the local church; and a way equally decent and orderly in which churches, through District Association, State Conference, and National Council, can accomplish their reasonable purposes. It is, and always has been, a fundamental principle of Congregationalism, that methods employed, and ends sought to be attained, must be reasonable and sensible. Rules are made for the church; not the church for the rules.

Church Action and Common Sense. In respect of their end, they must be done unto edification. In respect of the manner, decently and in order, according to the nature of the things themselves, and civil and church custom. Doth not even nature itself teach you? Yea, they are in some sort determined particularly, namely, that they be done in such a manner as, all circumstances considered, is most expedient for edification.—*Cambridge Platform*, 1, 4.

The Power of Reasonableness. It hath so much force as there is force in the reason of it.—*Richard Mather.*

Is Congregational Liberty Safe? Liberty always involves peril. The freedom of the human will is a perilous thing in the government of God. It has involved the world in a close approach to ruin, but God has deemed liberty with all its attending risks better than a divine tyranny, and what is better is in the long run safer. Democracy in the church is quite as safe as democracy in the state. It has its perils in both places, but so also has tyranny. Congregationalists recognize fully the dangers of liberty, and in nowise confounding it with license, stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free.

Freedom Always Dangerous. Freedom has always been regarded as a dangerous word by those in authority. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that these obscure men who contended for it so unequivocally as a right and not merely as a convenience should have been persecuted by the state.—*Vernon:* Southworth Lectures, 1914.

The Freedom of the Planets, and the Laws They Obey. Men who are in haste to see the end of things, and impatient with the slow processes of merely moral development, especially if their

taste lie in the direction of a "strong" government, are often provoked by those concessions which have just been made that the past, or even the present, cannot bind the future, to stigmatize our system as loose, precarious, and perilous. Whether it be such, depends upon the view which one takes of it. I know of nothing in the visible universe, to an uninstructed eye, much more "loose, precarious and perilous," than the solar system of which this earth forms a humble part. Here is the vast circle of her orbit sweeping five hundred and fifty millions of miles, or so, around through space—a race-course without any solid gravel under foot, or fence on either side. What is to hinder our planet from plunging wildly through the heavens, colliding with her sister planets, and wrecking herself against the sun on the one hand, or irrecoverably hurling herself off tangential into unimaginable chill and dark abysm of nowhere, on the other? Nothing which one can see. There is no "strong" government bristling with penalties; no steel cable to hold it to its central duty; no groove nor flange to guide it; nothing, absolutely nothing, but the subtle, invisible, impalpable force of God's will upon it, and God's way in it.—*Dexter:* Congregationalism as Seen in Its Literature, p. 705.

Is Congregationalism a Perfect System? It is not. No human system is perfect, nor does any system eliminate human elements of imperfection by calling itself divine. One serious error in Congregational polity, as of other church polities, has been the assumption that if we could discover precisely how the apostles governed churches in the apostolic age, we should be perfectly sure how we ought to govern churches in a very different age. The apostles showed great resourcefulness in adapting their organization to the needs of their time, and it is quite conceivable that they would do some things differently if they were living now.

Efficiency. The antithesis between democracy and efficiency is far more acute and difficult in the church than in civic society. More than any other institution on earth, the church is under obligation to respect, defend and vindicate democracy. For not to priests and prelates or the high ones of earth is the message of God sent forth, but in the hearts of the humble and the contrite is the temple, and with them the communion, of the Almighty Father. Woe must soon betide any church so impious as to refuse to hear the people.—*Nolan R. Best:* An Efficient Democratic Church, in The Continent, May 21, 1914.

A Growing Adjustment. Much indefiniteness and defectiveness have all along prevailed with regard to Independent polity. And the final reason for that is that the Christocratic principle, which is the basis of Congregationalism, has not yet found appropriate institutional expression. Nonconformity's ideal was high—a polity and

institution which were the Spirit's express creation through Christ-dependent men. But the ideal miscarried in process of articulation, and Independency, instead of following its creative impulse, turned aside from its own cardinal principle and became imitative of what it believed to be the New Testament model of a church. The result is, as our most recent historian affirms, that the world has still to wait for an adequate constructive expression of the Nonconformist spirit. (Clark's History of Nonconformity, i:203.) That conclusion is significant, particularly as it emerges as the dominant lesson of a detailed study of our history. And yet it is not an astonishing conclusion, for the historical complications in which the ideal was enmeshed were bound to affect its expression. And they certainly obscured the vision of those who should have been the guardians of that ideal. But the true significance of that conclusion is this: It requires that a new constructive effort be made to articulate the Congregational ideal. And since the environment has changed, and the world-issues are so vitally and vastly different, it is natural to infer that its institutional form will be correspondingly different.—*Meredith Davis:* Congregationalism and Its Ideal; Constructive Quarterly, September, 1915, p. 549.

No System Is Perfect. The Congregational pastor must learn—and he surely will have speedy opportunity to learn—that nothing works thoroughly well in this sad world of ours. But if Congregationalism, as a matter of principles variously applied to human living in family, church, and state, is to be tested by its real success, it will bear the test better than any other church order since the days of the Apostolic Church. For there has been for two hundred and fifty years vastly more Congregationalizing, in principle, of other churches, than there has been Presbyterianizing, or Methodizing, or Episcopizing of Congregational churches. Congregationalism did not work thoroughly well in the case of the apostolic churches. Christianity did not work thoroughly well in the case of the ancient world. No form of church order has worked in the past, or does in present work, thoroughly well. But Congregationalism is, nevertheless, as a matter of principle, the New Testament way of constituting and managing Christian churches.—*Ladd:* Principles of Church Polity, 96-97.

Is Congregationalism Effective? The relatively slow growth of Congregationalism has often been pointed to as a proof that Congregationalism is not effective as a form of church organization, but the growth of the Congregational principle has by no means been confined to the Congregational denomination. It has made many and lamentable mistakes, but it has manifested a power of adaptation entirely consistent with loyalty to its basic principle and is attacking its problems of administration and expansion with a vigor which give it large promise for the years to come.

Governor Hutchinson's Testimony. But, however this constitution may appear in theory, we shall seldom meet with an instance in which there has been so steady and so general an adherence to the principles on which it was founded, and so much harmony subsisting, not only in particular churches, but also between one church and another, for fifty years together.—*Hutchinson:* Hist. of Massachusetts, 1795; Vol. I, p. 374.

Seedtime and Harvest. Religion is not always sown and reaped in one age. One soweth, and another reapeth. The many that are already gathered, by the mercy of God, into the kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ, and the nearness of many more through the whole land—for the regions are white unto the harvest—do promise, in less than a hundred years, if our sins and theirs make not us and them unworthy of this mercy, a very plentiful harvest.—*John Robinson:* Justification of Separation, Works, ii, 65.

Nothing Else Could Have Done What Congregationalism Has Accomplished. Few persons, if any, can hesitate to agree that no other system of church government than Congregationalism could have been successful in New England at that day. No other system could have done so much for liberty, civil and religious. Independent churches formed the earliest and most enduring barriers and bulwarks at once against hierarchies and monarchies.—*Robert C. Winthrop:* Oration at Plymouth, December 21, 1870.

Democracy and Efficiency. It's no shame to democracy that it conflicts with efficiency. Nothing on this earth can have all the advantages. Democracy has a rich abundance of values and virtues. Efficiency is simply one lack. Efficiency's watchword is, "Get the thing done!" But democracy gets the thing done only slowly and haltingly. Before a mass of people can decide to act together, there must first of all be a tedious discussion of it. Patient pressure is necessary to get the masses to move, even after they are convinced. Usually, also, there are diverging interests that have to be placated by compromise. So when the thing is done, it is often done only in a patchwork fashion. When quick results are imperative, the only way for it is to put all the responsibility on one man. Then there is only one mind to make up and no committee meeting to call. Indeed, democracy itself is glad to step aside in emergency and let one-man efficiency take right of way. When the town's afire, nobody proposes a town meeting to decide how to stop the blaze. Till the last embers are dead, the fire chief is a despot. Yet none of this is reason for discounting democracy. In the ordinary, normal ways of life there are plenty of reasons for preferring it in spite of delays, indirections and wastes.

There is something worth more in life than efficiency, and that is the wisdom of sound living. And the man who knows how to be efficient doesn't always know about wise ways to live. To tell the truth, democracy doesn't either. But everything taken together, there runs a better average chance that the democracy will know what's good for human life—for social human life, especially—than that the typical individual citizen will know. The sole way for a democratic church to get its tasks done efficiently is to look out from among its own number men of good report—whose democratic and Christian spirit is assured of, whose unselfish loyalty it

believes in, whose competent wisdom it knows—and appoint them to be its leaders in the tasks waiting. Then let it support them and follow them as they lead. Thus the church which has learned the secrets of trust, sympathy, counsel, prayer, and love may have efficiency and democracy together.—*Nolan R. Best:* In The Continent, May 21, 1914.

Force and Freedom. It is freely admitted that Congregational fellowship makes for a unity in purpose and service as strong and sufficient, if not stronger really, than where legislation is enacted by which churches are frequently compelled to assent to what they cannot easily accept or conscientiously approve. Whatever is wise, true, just, and honorable, all Congregational churches cheerfully endorse. Though we are represented by many different communions, nevertheless no other body of believers approaches the strength in fellowship illustrated by Congregationalism. Our churches acknowledge a Head, who is Jesus Christ; they have a bond of faith—the essential truths of the Gospels; they recognize a law—the law of love; they are one in Jesus Christ.—*Asher Anderson:* Congregational Faith and Practice, p. 7.

Its Faith and Works. It was founded in protest against ecclesiastical autocracy. It adopted as its central affirmation the equality of men before God and in the world. It speedily emancipated itself from its inherited union with the state. It was early in the field as one after another modern movements of reform arose. Whether the battle was against intemperance or against slavery, against intolerance or public dishonor, Congregational men and women were usually found ranged on the right side. It would have been both strange and shameful if such a history had led to no conspicuous results these fifty years past. Happily, no such outcome has been recorded. The Pilgrim faith has continued to produce social fruits.—*Herring:* Congregationalism in Recent History, p. 21.

III. THE LARGER CONGREGATIONALISM

In What Interdenominational Bodies Do Congregationalists Share? Congregationalists are represented in the active work of practically all interdenominational agencies. They had large share in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance, and are active participants in the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. They are active in the Laymen's Missionary Movement and other forms of fellowship and service. They support the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society, and other interdenominational publishing and missionary organizations.

Federal Council. A chapter in the author's Congregational Manual is devoted to the organization of the Federal Council and gives a complete outline of its principles and activities.

What Is the International Congregational Council? The International Congregational Council is a body which came into existence in 1891 and which was organized with a constitution in Edinburgh in 1898. It consists of 400 members elected by the National Councils of the several nations represented. One hundred and fifty members are chosen from the United States, one hundred and fifty from the British Isles, twenty from Canada, thirty-two from Australasia, ten from South Africa and thirty-eight from the rest of the world. All Congregational foreign missionaries are members of the Council. At present members from the United States are chosen by a Committee of the National Council with power to fill vacancies. This has seemed necessary in view of the infrequent meetings of the Council and the long distance which delegates must travel to attend it. It is desirable, however, that some plan be formulated whereby there may be nominations from different states, in order to secure as equitable a distribution as possible.

Thus far meetings of the International Council have

been held in London, 1891; Boston, 1899, and Edinburgh, 1903.

In the ordinary course the next meeting of the International Congregational Council would occur in 1918, but it is likely that it will be held in 1920. The report of the Committee on International Council made before the National Council at New Haven in 1915 proposed that the next meeting be held in connection with the celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims, and this was approved by the National Council. The Council will probably last nine days. The first part will be devoted to historical topics, and the last to a consideration of matters connected with the progress of the denomination and of the work of the Church universal.

International Councils and World Wide Congregationalism. Congregationalism has become conscious of its world-wide mission largely through the international councils held from time to time in different parts of the world. This tendency toward connexionalism does not mean any abandonment of their original principles. They still stand for the position that the members of a Christian church should be Christians, and that the sole head of the Church is Jesus Christ. In things theological they allow a wide latitude of opinion, and their general position is broadly evangelical.—*Selbie:* History of Nonconformity, p. 245.

How Large Is Congregationalism? The Congregational churches in the United States have a total membership of something more than three-quarters of a million. Their churches number more than 6,000, and the number of their ministers is about equal to that of their churches. The Congregational churches of the world aggregate approximately 1,500,000 members, with something like 15,000 organized churches. This is not, however, the whole of Congregationalism. The Baptist churches are Congregational, and so are the Disciples of Christ, the Christian Connection, the Universalists, the Unitarians, and a number of smaller denominations. Taken together, the churches that recognize the Congregational principle constitute both in America and throughout the world a very large and increasing section of the whole Christian Church.

A Few Statistics. The denomination has 6,093 churches, 5,923 ministers, 763,182 members, 757,873 persons in its Sunday Schools, 133,474 in its young people's societies, 85,811 in its men's organizations, church property in the United States valued at $84,565,377, endowments held by local churches to the amount of $10,204,063, these churches having an annual income of $10,716,311. The missionary societies of the denomination hold endowment funds to the amount of $9,000,000 with mission property of about the same value. They have nearly 4,000 persons under their commission and receive an annual income of $2,500,000. The publishing house has a capital of about $200,000 and does an annual business of over half a million dollars. In addition, a large and influential group of theological seminaries, colleges and academies are closely identified with the denominational life. It is not possible to give more than an estimate of the number of their students, or the amount of their property, but the one cannot be less than 20,000 nor the other less than $75,000,000.—*Hubert C. Herring:* In pamphlet, Matters Congregational, 1915.

The Congregational Spirit. We are widely Congregationally organized; the Baptists, Disciples, Congregationalists and smaller bodies make up a very large per cent of American Christianity; but we are almost altogether Congregationally spirited.—*Vernon:* Southworth Lectures.

We Have Become a Congregational Nation; or, as we sometimes call it, a Republic.—*Alexander McKenzie.*

As a Polity, Congregationalism is much more widespread than the Congregational name. The Baptists, the Plymouth Brethren, the Disciples of Christ, the Unitarians, of the United States, as well as certain sections of the Adventists and of the Lutherans, are congregationally governed.—*Williston Walker:* Art. "Congregationalism," in Hastings' Dict. of Relig. and Ethics.

What Is the Polity of the Unitarian Churches? The Unitarian churches are Congregational in government. A number of older New England churches, which were orthodox Congregational churches until about a century ago, remain with the constitutions and covenants unchanged. Whatever doctrinal differences exist between them and the so-called orthodox churches, they remain, as they always have been, Congregational in government.

Our Common Heritage. Congregationalism is identified with all the great features of our national life. It has stimulated independent thought, actively promoted civil liberty and the practice of self-government. The spirit that led to the establishment of churches governed by the congregation led to the establishment of the New England town meeting, and finally to the democratic system of national government under which we live. A democratic church in a free state, which tolerates all other forms of religious faith and polity, relies for its wise conduct and permanent development upon the sound and widespread education of the people, and

particularly upon a highly trained ministry. By the inevitable tendencies of its fundamental principles, Congregationalism has therefore contributed more than any other polity to the growth of toleration in religion and to the upbuilding of popular education. The great common school system we enjoy is largely a product of the spirit of New England Congregationalism; and Congregationalists have been foremost in America in founding colleges, universities, and seats of learning.

Congregationalism gives free play to the infinite diversity of human faculty and aspiration, and thus upbuilds the true unity of the spirit in place of sectarian rivalry or barren uniformity. The purpose and result of Congregationalism has been summed up in the saying that it "helps to educate men and women, for righteousness, through freedom, to unity."

It is, then, a noble heritage of independence, made effective for human welfare by co-operation and fellowship, into which the churches of the Unitarian order are permitted to enter. By this heritage Trinitarian Congregationalists and Unitarian Congregationalists alike are enriched.—*Unitarian Handbook*, pp. 11-12.

What Is the Polity of the Universalist Churches? The Universalist churches are Congregational in polity. Originating as they did in times of controversy over the fate of impenitent men, they maintain certain doctrinal tenets which lie outside the province of this present volume. In practically all their church government they are guided by the same principles which are recognized in other Congregational churches.

During the time that persons attending Universalist ministrations in New Hampshire and some portions of Massachusetts were taxed for the support of the "standing order" and appealed to the courts for relief, the courts in both these states decided that Universalists were not a sect distinct from Congregationalists.

A recent Universalist historian truly says: "This decision was not made in ignorance of the fact that Universalists differed from Congregationalists in theological opinions, but wholly on the ground—singular as it may now seem—that Universalists were Congregationalists in a sense by being a sect of independent parishes."

A Court Decision. Presbyterians and Congregationalists are different sects within the meaning of the constitution, because they differ in church government and discipline, though they agree in doctrinal belief. . . . Generally speaking, the Universalists

have no distinct formulary of government and discipline. In large towns they sometimes associate and worship together. But embracing this tenet makes in general no more difference as to the form of church government and discipline than embracing the Calvinist, Arminian, Hopkinsian does.—*Chief Justice Smith,* in Muzzy vs. Wilkins; Quoted in Eddy's History of the Universalists, p. 432.

What Is the Polity of the Baptist Churches? The Baptist churches are Congregational in government. Each local church is self-governing, elects its own officers, and formulates its own confession of faith. In doctrine as in polity the Baptist churches are in essential accord with other Congregational churches, their only important difference being their insistence upon adult baptism by immersion and the more or less rigid insistence of some of them upon close communion. Notwithstanding these differences, which many Baptists regard as important, they are Congregational, and every fundamental principle accepted by Congregationalists in church government is recognized also by the Baptists.

Baptist Congregationalism. The government is administered by the body acting together, where no one possesses a pre-eminence, but all enjoy an equality of rights; and in deciding matters of opinion, the majority bears rule. The pastor exercises only such control over the body as his official and personal influence may allow, as their teacher and leader and the expounder of the great Lawgiver's enactments. His influence is paramount, but not his authority. In the decision of questions he has but his single vote. His rule is in the moral force of his counsels, his instruction and guidance in matters of truth and duty, and also in wisely directing the assemblies, whether for worship or business. Much less have the deacons any authoritative or dictatorial control over church affairs. Matters of administration are submitted to the body and by them decided.—*Hiscox:* Baptist Directory, pp. 144-145.

What Is the Polity of the Disciples Churches? The Disciples of Christ are Congregational in government. Each church elects its own officers and adopts its own rules. In general they agree in requiring baptism by immersion, though none of them insist upon immersion as a prerequisite to admission to the Lord's Supper. Like other Congregational churches, the Disciples accept the Bible as

their final authority, and they are earnest advocates of church union.

Alexander Campbell's Polity. The community, the church, the multitude of the faithful, are the foundation of official power. This power descends from the body itself, not from its servants. The Body of Christ, under Him as its head, is the fountain and spring of all official power and privilege. . . . Its bishops teach, preside and execute the laws of Christ in all its convocations. The deacons, a large and diverse class of functionaries composed of stewards, almoners, treasurers, doorkeepers, etc., wait continually on its various services.—The Christian System, XXV, xix, pp. 88-89.

Disciples Are Congregationalists. The view of baptism set forth in these chapters relieves us of the need of all forced theological fictions and provides us with a logical justification of the course which the hearts of all the more generous-minded churchmen among us prompt us to pursue. Without the slightest mental reservation we are left free to affirm that a Presbyterian church is a church of Christ, just as truly as a Disciples or a Baptist church is a church of Christ. Its baptism, i. e., its initiation, is valid. The worst we can say of it is that it was irregularly performed. Regularity in the administration of the rite of initiation into the Church of Christ—historical regularity, dating back to apostolic practice—demands that the candidate be baptized by immersion in water. But immersion is not essential in order to give validity to the initiation. Any doctrine of baptism whose effect is to unchurch the Church, as Thomas Campbell warned his son, Alexander, is surely fallacious.—*C. C. Morrison:* The Meaning of Baptism, p. 215.

Do Disciples Churches Have Creeds? Theoretically not; but unwritten creeds are as certainly creeds as are written creeds; the *lex non scripta* is as valid as the *lex scripta.* But some Disciples churches have very substantial creeds incorporated in their covenants. The following will serve as an illustration, and is taken from a standard manual for the organization and government of churches of the Disciples of Christ:

A Creed Within a Disciples' Covenant. We, the undersigned, have been baptized upon confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We desire to unite in a congregation because we believe in the wisdom of associated effort in things spiritual as well as in things temporal; because we earnestly desire to grow in grace and in knowledge of the Word of God; and because we believe that by combining our means and talents we may become more influential witnesses for Christ in this community, securing thereby more consideration for our cause as well as a deeper Christian life for ourselves. We have already covenanted with God in Christ. In so doing we realize that we have taken God the Father to be our God, Jesus Christ to be our Saviour, the Holy Spirit to

be our cherished Guest and Sanctifier, the Word of God to be our only rule of Faith and Practice, the salvation of all men to be an object of perpetual concern, and the people of God to be in an especial sense our people. In order to fulfill most effectively this solemn covenant, we do now on this the.....day of....., in the year of our Lord ....., unite to form a Church of Christ in ....., and we do hereby covenant to do all in our power to promote the growth, spirituality and general prosperity of this congregation. To this end we pledge ourselves by the aid of God's Word and Spirit to lead lives of personal righteousness, to give freely as the Lord blesses our labors for the maintenance of his cause, to attend faithfully upon the services of the church, and to do good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of faith. In testimony of our deliberateness and sincerity, we hereunto affix our names.—*Joseph H. Foy,* Pastor of Fourth Christian Church of St. Louis, in The Christian Worker, pp. 121, 122.

What Is the Polity of the Christian Connection? The Christian Connection is Congregational in government. It has, however, annual conferences composed of ministers and lay delegates which receive and ordain pastors, and a General Convention meeting once in four years. It is divided into two bodies, North and South, the division resulting from the anti-slavery discussion in 1854. The churches of this order recognize no creed but the Bible, and their polity is in all important points similar to that of other Congregational churches.

A Congregational Body. The churches of the Christian Connection, nearly fifteen hundred in number, comprising upwards of one hundred thousand communicants, are simply Congregational churches. There was once a reason for their separate organization. At the present day, no such reason (aside from the fact that the organization already exists) could be alleged which would not be equally a reason why the communion of the Congregational churches should be itself divided by the withdrawal or exclusion of some of its worthiest churches.—*Bacon:* Congregationalists, p. 259.

Is Congregationalism Identical with Independency? Congregationalism is not identical with Independency, although the two polities have frequently been confused, particularly in England. Independency does not recognize, as Congregationalism does, the fellowship of the churches as a part of their organic structure.

Congregationalists and Independents. Historically the two

terms have been used interchangeably. For the last two hundred years most Independents have been Congregationalists—or, at least, the churches describing themselves as "Independent" churches have preserved the traditions of the Congregational polity. But under the Commonwealth and the Protectorate many Congregationalists objected to be described as Independents; and there were many Independents who were not Congregationalists.—*R. W. Dale:* History of English Congregationalism, pp. 375-376.

Not Independency. We are much charged with what we own not, viz.:—Independency, when as we know not any Churches Reformed, more looking at sister Churches for helpe then ours doe, onely we can not have rule yet discovered from any friend or enemy, that we should be under Canon, or power of any other Church; under their Councell we are. We need not tell the wise whence Tyranny grew in Churches, and how commonwealths got their pressure in the like kind.—*Hugh Peters* (executed 1660)*:* Answer to the Elders, iv.

Freedom and Fellowship. Or else, if it could be clearly evinced by any of the Congregational men's words and writings, opinions or practices in Old England or New; first that they do altogether exclude the advice and counsel of the servants of Christ in neighbor churches, when there is occasion for it; or secondly, that they refuse to be accountable for their actions unto those who shall in a faire and orderly way, according to the rule of the Gospel, in the name of Christ desire them . . . I say if these things could be fairly made out against those of the Congregational way, it were something, then I confesse, our brethren (as in words they profess themselves) might justly accuse us before heaven and earth of Pride and Arrogancy, of presumption, Blasphemy and independency: but (forever blessed be the Lord) this they cannot do.—*Bartlet:* Model of the Primitive Congregational Way, 1647.

We Approve Not the Term. The state of the members of the militant visible church walking in order, was either before the law, economical, that is in families; or under the law, national; or since the coming of Christ, only congregational: (The term independent we approve not.) Therefore neither national, provincial nor classical.—Cambridge Platform of 1648, ii, 5.

Has Congregationalism Influenced Other Denominations? There is probably no denomination in America, no matter what its theoretical polity, which has not been notably influenced by the Congregational system. A recent volume by Bishop Thomas B. Neely makes frequent complaint of the growing tendency of Methodist churches to call their pastors almost to the disregard of conferences and bishops. There are Episcopal churches which, within the bounds of the local parish, definitely assert and practice the Congregational principle. Even Roman Catholicism,

which by the way has retained in its ritual some reminiscences of primitive Congregationalism, is influenced in no small degree by the voice of the people through the local parish.

Dr. Dexter Says: It is remarkable that a trace of this original Congregationalism, even to this day, maintains and justifies itself in the very ritual of the papal system; since the bishop is made to say, while ordaining a priest, "it was not without good reason that the fathers had ordained that the advice of the people should be taken in the election of those persons who were to serve at the altar; to the end that, having given assent to their ordination, they might the more readily yield obedience to those who were so ordained" ["Neque enim frustra a patribus institutum, ut de electione illorum qui ad regimen altaris adhibendi sunt, consulatur etiam populus," etc.].—Pontif. Rom. DeOrdinat. Pres. fol. 38.

Other Denominations Congregationalized. The prevailing power of the Congregational principle, in America, is nowhere more impressively manifested than in its practical dominance in those orders of the American church in which theoretically it is least recognized. No American sect has been organized with a loftier contempt of Congregational principles than the Methodist Episcopal Church as it took form under the controlling influence of John Wesley. "We are not republicans, and do not intend to be," was his characteristic dictum. But in spite of his intentions, that is the direction in which his great institute is tending. Even the form of the original oligarchy has been modified by our climatic conditions; and where the form remains, it is well understood, both within and without, that the absolute authority over the individual congregation is to be exercised with scrupulous regard to the previously ascertained wishes of the congregation.—*Bacon:* Congregationalists, pp. 260, 261.

What Is the Congregational Attitude Toward Christian Union? Congregationalists are, and always have been, friends of Christian union. It was not the intention of the Congregational fathers to found a sect, and every movement for denominational organization has been closely watched from within and jealously guarded lest it should in any wise widen whatever breach exists between the Congregational churches and other portions of the one Church of Christ. Congregationalism in its spirit is true catholicity.

Congregationalists not only believe in the spirit of Christian union, but in general they practice it, and they have been leaders in all forms of interdenominational effort,

repeatedly sacrificing their own advantage for the sake of maintaining close relations in spirit with the Church of Christ at large. Repeatedly they have gone with others who would not come with them. The spirit of the denomination in its relation to the Christian Church as a whole is admirably set forth in the resolution adopted at the National Council in its opening session in Oberlin in 1871, which became virtually a part of its Constitution.

The Oberlin Declaration. The members of the National Council, representing the Congregational churches of the United States, avail themselves of this opportunity to renew their previous declarations of faith in the unity of the Church of God.

While affirming the liberty of our churches, as taught in the New Testament, and inherited by us from our fathers, and from martyrs and confessors of foregoing ages, we adhere to this liberty all the more as affording the ground and hope of a more visible unity in time to come. We desire and propose to co-operate with all the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the expression of the same catholic sentiments solemnly avowed by the Council of 1865 on the Burial Hill at Plymouth, we wish, at this new epoch of our history, to remove, so far as in us lies, all causes of suspicion and alienation, and to promote the growing unity of counsel and of the effort among the followers of Christ. To us, as to our brethren, there is one body and one spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.

As little as did our fathers in their day, do we in ours, make a pretension to be the only churches of Christ. We find ourselves consulting and acting together under the distinctive name of Congregationalists because in the present condition of our common Christianity we have felt ourselves called to ascertain and to do our own appropriate part of the work of Christ's Church among men.

We especially desire, in prosecuting the common work of evangelizing our own land and the world, to observe the common and sacred law, that, in the wide field of the world's evangelization, we do our work in friendly co-operation with all those who love and serve our common Lord.

We believe in the Holy Catholic Church. It is our prayer and endeavor that the unity of the Church may be more and more apparent, and that the prayer of our Lord for his disciples may be speedily and completely answered, and all be one; that by consequence of this Christian unity in love, the world may believe in Christ as sent of the Father to save the world.

From the Boston Platform. The churches of the Congregational polity, as integral portions of Christ's Catholic Church, maintain all practicable communion with all other portions of the Church universal. While other churches differ from us in their internal polity, in their relations and connections with each other, in their forms of worship, or in the uninspired statements and definitions of doctrines disputed among Christians, and while we

disown their scheme of hierarchical or synodical government, we acknowledge as particular churches of Christ all congregations of Christian worshipers that acknowledge the Holy Scriptures as their supreme rule of faith and practice, and Christ as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.—1865, III, i, 3.

An Episcopal Bishop's Declaration. The only basis upon which the churches can come together into the unity of which the Lord Jesus prophesied, for which He prayed, and upon which He hinged the salvation of the world is the basis of Gospel republicanism of the purest type. The selection of this basis for church union would be justified by the history of organic Christianity.—*Bishop Wm. M. Brown,* of Arkansas: A Level Plan of Church Union, p. 78.

The Pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers. And so [John Robinson] advised us by all means . . . rather to study union than division.—*Edward Winslow:* Hypocrisie Unmasked.

Is Congregationalism Favorable to Progress? Congregationalism has been a progressive faith. It has always maintained a belief in the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, and also in the guidance of the Holy Spirit through whom those Scriptures are revealed. The brief confession of faith incorporated in the constitution of the National Council recognized this principle, in the words, "Depending, as did our fathers, upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth." It is interesting to note that the Pilgrim fathers had no thought of their system as a finality, but were willing to be "even as stepping-stones unto others for the performing of so great a work."

In a very interesting communication by Edward Winslow, printed in 1646, under the title of "Hypocrisie Unmasked," in reply to charges which one Samuel Gorton had made against the colonies, we have a remarkable paragraph setting forth the teaching of John Robinson, pastor of the Pilgrim fathers, as the Pilgrims were about to sail from Holland. Whether this formed a part of his farewell discourse we are not sure, but that it represents the spirit of Robinson we cannot doubt:

John Robinson's Faith in Progress. In the next place, for the wholesome counsell Mr. Robinson gave that part of the Church whereof he was Pastor, at their departure from him to begin the great worke of Plantation in New England, amongst other wholsome Instructions and Exhortations, hee used these expressions, or to the same purpose; We are now ere long to part asunder, and the Lord knoweth whether ever he should live to see our

faces again: but whether the Lord had appointed it or not, he charged us before God and his blessed Angels, to follow him no further then he followed Christ. And if God should reveal anything to us by any other instrument of his, to be as ready to receive it, as ever we were to receive any truth by his Ministry: For he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy Word. He took occasion also miserably to bewaile the state and condition of the Reformed churches, who were come to a period in Religion, and would goe no further then the instruments of their Reformation: As for example, the Lutherans they could not be drawne to goe beyond what Luther saw, for whatever part of God's will he had further imparted and revealed to Calvin, they will rather die then embrace it. And so also, saith he, you see the Calvinists, they stick where he left them: A misery much to bee lamented; For though they were precious shining lights in their times, yet God had not revealed his whole will to them: And were they now living, saith hee, they would bee as ready and willing to embrace further light, as that they had received. Here also he put us in mind of our Church-Covenant (at least that part of it) whereby wee promise and covenant with God and one with another, to receive whatsoever light or truth shall be made known to us from his written Word: but withall exhorted us to take heed what we received for truth, and well to examine and compare, and weigh it with other Scriptures of truth, before we received it; For, saith he, It is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick Antichristian darkness, and that full perfection of knowledge should breake forth at once.—*Winslow:* Hypocrisie Unmasked, 1646.

Will Congregationalism Endure? Congregationalism in some form will endure as long as democracy endures, as long as Christian brotherhood endures; but Congregationalism as we now know it may undergo some important changes in its adaptation to changing world conditions and conditions framed by its relation to other religious bodies.

This being true, it might be assumed that it is almost a waste of time to study church government, but the very reverse is true. The changes which are to be wrought, not only in Congregationalism but in all organized Christianity, need to be wrought under the guidance of men whose experience and knowledge qualify them for the task.

The life of a church, as truly as the life of a political party, is one of adaptations. Old issues die out. New questions rise. There are new opponents, and new opportunities. In the facing of these, political parties modify their organization or die, and so do churches. No church,

not even the Roman Catholic, remains unchanged through the ages. Everything that lives grows, and everything that grows changes.

The Congregational churches have met new conditions. Their situation is very different from that which confronted them in 1620, or even in 1865. There is a whole world of new issues and new problems. The industrial world has felt and is feeling it. The little village factory has gone out, and the great city factory has come in. Population has shifted from the country to town. Changes in the life of the people involve changes in their institutions. These changes take place in good part without definite purpose or guidance; they evolve under the influences of growth. But many of them are the result of definite thought and purpose.

Even the churches that think they do not change, do change. The Episcopal Church has sometimes supposed it did not change in coming to America, but it did change. It dropped the Athanasian Creed, damnatory clauses and all, and it came nearer than most people know to dropping the Nicene Creed also. The Roman Catholic Church thinks it does not change; but it organizes Knights of Columbus and Sisters of Charity, and elaborates its organization as it thinks it needs, and adds a dogma like the infallibility of the Pope or the Immaculate Conception, as it has done in our own day. Roman Catholicism as it now exists under an alleged infallible pope is the youngest of all church polities.

The Congregational form of organization has not changed more than these less elastic forms in its essential principles, but it makes no secret of its changes. From time to time it faces new issues, and endeavors to meet them with such adaptations as are necessary.

We are certain to meet the necessity of changes in our denominational life. A group of questions rises out of the normal development of our great common interests. We have a great volume of business, educational, philanthropic,

and missionary, which belongs to no one local church, but to all the Congregational churches together. We have other interests even larger, such as the publication of the Bible, and plans for vast movements in foreign lands where the Christian Church must stand as a unit. We have been doing this work well, but not so well as we hope to do it in future.

Permanent Factors in Reorganization. And now, at the close of the nineteenth century, the Christian societies find themselves surrounded by new conditions. There are new intellectual conditions and new social conditions. The question which presses for answer and will not be evaded is how much of the form which grew out of, and was good for, earlier and different circumstances must be retained or abandoned now. The contingency which has to be faced is that the intellectual forces of the civilized world may be arrayed against Christianity, as once they were in its favor; and that the social forces which are drawing men into combination may draw them into combinations in which Christianity will have no part. For these contingencies the Church of Christ is prepared. It survived Gnosticism, it will survive Agnosticism. It survived polytheism, it will survive atheism. It survived the disruption of European society when the Roman Empire fell to pieces, it will survive the possible disruption of European society when, if ever, Labor wins its victory over Capital, and Socialism over Aristocracy.

But the survival of the Church of Christ—that is, of the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the world—is not necessarily the survival of this or that existing institution. After each of its earlier struggles, there was at least this mark of conflict, that there was a re-adaptation of form. . . . But, whatever be the form in which they are destined to be shaped, the work which the Christian societies, as societies, have to do, in the days to come, is not inferior to any work which has lain before them in any epoch of their history. For the air is charged with thunder, and the times that are coming may be times of storm. There are phenomena beneath the surface of society, of which it would be hardly possible to overrate the significance. There is a widening separation of class from class; there is a growing social strain; there is a disturbance of the political equilibrium; there is the rise of an educated proletariat. To the problems which these suggest, Christianity has the key. Its unaccomplished mission is to reconstruct society on the basis of brotherhood. . . . To you and me and men like ourselves is committed, in these anxious days, that which is at once an awful responsibility and a splendid destiny—to transform this modern world into a Christian society, . . . to gather together the scattered forces of a divided Christendom into a confederation in which organization will be of less account than fellowship, with one Spirit, and faith in one Lord—into a communion wide as human life and deep as human need—into a Church which shall

outshine even the golden glory of its dawn by the splendor of its eternal noon.—*Hatch:* Organization of the Early Churches.

What Form of Congregationalism Will Endure? Among the various forms of Congregationalism, we may distinguish three principal groups. What may be called the Liberal group, though the name we like not nor its implications, consists of the Unitarians and Universalists. What may be called, for want of a better name, the immersionist group, consists of the Baptists, the Disciples and the Christian Connection. The third is the historic group of Congregational churches, sometimes called, by way of distinction, the Orthodox churches, though this name too we disallow as being unofficial and to some extent misleading. It is interesting to forecast the future and to ask which of these three groups is most likely to represent the Congregational principle in the future.

It is not likely that the so-called Liberal group will be the sole surviving monument of the Congregational principle. However necessary their protest may have been at the outset of their history (and no discussion of that question is pertinent to this book) and however faithfully they may have served the cause of Christ thus far, either in their own communions or beyond, they have manifested no power of growth or promise of future expansion which justifies a belief in their coming ascendency.

Nor is it likely that the thought of coming generations will lay as much emphasis as has sometimes been laid in the past upon questions relating to the mode of baptism, or the terms of admission to the Lord's Supper. Close communion has never been practiced by the Disciples, the Christian Connection, or the Free Baptists, and is not practiced by Baptists in England. It is virtually a dead letter in the larger and more influential Baptist churches of the North. Close baptism can have no logical standing after close communion has gone. Moreover, it is increasingly evident that denominations which accept the Bible as their sole rule of faith and practice cannot logically superimpose

the interpretation of a minority of Christendom upon the Bible and compel not only its acceptance but also the admission that in accepting it nothing has been added to the words written in the book. It is increasingly difficult to believe that Jesus who ate the passover, not at all as commanded in the Old Testament (Ex. 11:10-11), not standing but reclining, not with sandals on but with sandals removed, who did not hasten away after the Supper but remained in conversation for a considerable length of time, who did not burn what was left but had enough remaining for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and who thus disregarded practically every incidental form connected with the observance of his nation's most sacred festival, cared enough about forms to wish his disciples to separate and quarrel over them.

No man is wise enough to say what modifications must come into any system in order to adapt it to the future of the human race, but we may feel reasonably certain that the democratic form of church government will be at least one of the permanent forms in the life of American Christianity and there is some good reason to believe that it will become, as increasingly it is, the dominant form; and further, there is no present reason to believe that the strong, free historic type represented in traditional Congregationalism will pass away, or give place either to a sacramental or to the so-called liberal type. In church as in state we may still believe that government of the people, for the people and by the people will not perish from the earth.

The Trend of Baptist and Disciples Practice. But the finer spirits in both these immersion-practicing bodies recoil at the implications of their practice. They are coming to see with some degree of clearness that to refuse to honor a credential from another congregation and to refuse to receive the bearer of it is to affront that other congregation, to discredit the previous church affiliation of the bearer of the credential, and to invalidate his Christian status and experience. Such a procedure is the very essence of sectarianism. Indeed it may properly be called congregational phariseeism, and is rightly resented by affusion-practicing churches who know that its "holier than thou" implications are totally unfounded.—*C. C. Morrison:* The Meaning of Baptism, p. 211.

IV. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

What Is the Meaning of the Word Church? The New Testament word translated church is the Greek word ecclesia. It is important to remember that Jesus did not invent a new word, but employed one already familiar, with meanings well understood both by his immediate disciples and by their Gentile converts. This noun is derived from a verb meaning to call out. As used in the New Testament and in classic Greek, its primary significance is not that of separation, as of individuals called out from among the world, but of convocation, as of an assembly, called out from the homes of the persons assembled. The word had long been employed in Athens to signify the general assembly of the citizens qualified to vote in municipal affairs. The term as used in classic Greek is virtually equivalent to our modern use of the idea expressed in a town meeting.

The word ecclesia or church is also found in the Septuagint, where it is commonly used to translate the Hebrew word *qahal.* By an interesting coincidence, the root of these two words is very nearly the same. Still further, it is not unlike the English call. The word occurs seventy-six times in the Greek Old Testament, or in some readings seventy-seven, and there are twenty instances of its use in the Apocrypha. As employed in the Old Testament, the term signifies the congregation or assembly of Israel. The earliest instance is Lev. 8:3, which reads in Greek, "Assemble thou all the synagogues of the ecclesia." The whole company thus was gathered at the door of the tent of meeting. In such passages as I Samuel 19:20, the ecclesia is not the whole national assembly, but the company of the prophets gathered together. In some instances it is used in the plural, as in Psalm 27:12 and Psalm 68:26, where God is praised "in the congregations." There is also a "congregation of the wicked," as in Proverbs 26:5. In

some instances the term is used of an army, as in Ezekiel 23:24, "And they shall come against thee with weapons, chariots, wagons, and with an ecclesia of peoples." Even in the cases of which this is an extreme illustration, the thought is of the assembly, of a company called together in response to a definite invitation or proclamation. In some of the Old Testament passages the ecclesia definitely includes old and young, the aged and little children.

In the New Testament the word ecclesia appears one hundred and fifteen times. Of its particular uses there will be discussion hereafter. The important thing to be recognized at the outset is that it was no new word and represented no inherently new idea. The word came to the Jews with definite Old Testament associations, and also with a connotation derived from its use in Greek politics. The ecclesia of a city like Athens was the whole body of citizens called together to legislate and to determine the policy of the state. It had leaders and officers, but the people constituted the sovereign body. So in the Old Testament, while there were prophets, scribes and authorities learned in the law, the ecclesia was the body of the people. It was this body which ratified the Law (Deut. 27:11-26); it was this body which joined in solemn covenant to obey Jehovah Josh. 24:1-2, 16-24). The New Testament inherited this word with these definite connotations.

The Ecclesia in Primitive Religions. The ecclesia, the meeting, the gathering together, the congregation, has a far higher importance than for the mere purpose of unity in an outward function. It is the means by which that most potent agent in religious life, collective suggestion, is brought to bear upon the mind. It has been instinctively recognized by every religion, and especially by mystical teachers, as an indispensable element in the dissemination of doctrine.—*Brinton:* Religion of Primitive Peoples, p. 178.

The Ecclesia in Athens and Sparta. The ecclesia at Athens was the general assembly of the citizens in which they met for the direct exercise of their sovereign power. . . . The assembly of Spartan freeman possessed, in theory at least, the supreme authority in all matters affecting the general interests of the state. —*Smith:* Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, Article Ecclesia.

The Meanings of the Word Before Jesus Used It. The word ecclesia has an important history behind it when it first appears in Christian literature. It was the regular designation of the whole body of citizens in a free Greek state, "called out," or summoned to the transaction of public business. It had then been employed by the Greek translators of the Old Testament as a natural rendering of the Hebrew *qahal*, the whole "congregation" of Israel regarded in its entirety as the people of God. . . . Thus the traditions of the word enabled it to appeal alike to Jews and Gentiles as a fitting designation of the new people of God, the Christian society regarded as a corporate whole.—*Canon J. A. Robinson*, in Encyclopedia Biblia, Article Church.

The Life of the Christian Ecclesia. As an essential social being, man lives in communities, and depends upon his communities for all that makes his civilization articulate. His communities, as both Plato and Aristotle already observed, have a sort of organic life of their own, so that we can compare a hugely developed community, such as a state, either to the soul of a man or to a living animal. A community is not a mere collection of individuals. It is a sort of live unit, that has organs, as the body of an individual has organs. A community grows or decays, is healthy or diseased, is young or aged, much as any individual member of the community possesses such characters.—*Royce:* The Problem of Christianity, Vol. I, pp. 61, 62.

Does the Bible Use "Church" of Things Secular? Neither the Old Testament nor the New restrict the word church to sacred uses. Treaties on church polity hitherto have generally fallen into the natural if not inevitable error of assuming that the apostles began after the death of Jesus with a word which had for them a definite and wholly sacred connotation; that the concept "the Church" stood out in their thought and that of their contemporaries as defining an institution separate from, and contrasted with, the world. Recent studies in the great mass of literature never till now available show how erroneous was this assumption, and have driven us back to the Bible to discover that there also the term is used with great flexibility.

For instance, we discover that the Book of Acts, which uses the word ecclesia twenty-three times, employs it for a community or group or assembly, either Gentile or Jewish or Christian, and never as a term definitive of the Christian company as different in kind from other companies. The Lord added to the ecclesia at Jerusalem those that were being saved; the howling mob of Ephesus con-

stituted an ecclesia which the town-clerk addressed, declaring that such matters should be settled by a lawful ecclesia, that is, a regularly called meeting of the proper authorities. It has, indeed, become an argument, and no light one, for an earlier date of the Book of Acts than has sometimes been accorded it, that the word church is thus used with the freedom belonging to the period before ecclesia had become a technical term.

The New Use of the Term. The name, the Church (*qahal*, translated ecclesia) was the happiest stroke which the primitive community accomplished in the way of descriptive titles (that it goes back to Jesus himself is not very probable, in spite of Matt. 16: 18, 18: 17). Paul found it already in use, and indeed in three different senses: as a general name for those who believed in Christ, "those of the Church," as meaning the individual community, and as meaning the assembling together of the community. The primitive community took over the most solemn expression which Judaism used for the whole body of the people in relation to the worship of God.—*Harnack:* Constitution and Law of the Church, p. 32.

Who Established the New Testament Church? The beginnings of the Church may be clearly traced to Jesus during the period of his earthly ministry. Like other teachers of the time, He gathered disciples about himself and instructed them in the principles of his teaching. To them He gradually unfolded the simple method of his system. Under pressure of opposition and persecution, this organization gradually detached itself from that of the Jewish synagogue, and attained self-consciousness as the Church of Jesus Christ.

The Church from Jesus. While we do not argue that any given church can appeal to Jesus as the author of its characteristic doctrine or constitution, the connection of the Church as such with Jesus is as certain as anything in human experience.—*James Denney:* The Church and the Kingdom, p. 4.

Product of His Personality. Those subtle influences which we call the spirit of the age and the spirit of the teacher require for their detailed comprehension fuller literary data than we possess; but from the existing records and from the succeeding religious development we may infer their general character; and it appears that the early Church was the direct product of the teaching and personality of Jesus.—*C. H. Toy:* Judaism and Christianity, p. 427.

Began at Pentecost. The Church was not begun until after the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost; and it is

never mentioned, except prospectively, before that time.—*Jacob:* Ecclesiastical Polity, p. 13.

Church Founded on Christ. Protestantism has made the Bible, rather than Christ, the formal basis of the Church. Each of the Protestant systems has attempted to give the New Testament scriptures a regulative value, even in the details of church polity. Congregationalism in particular has modeled its usages on those of the primitive Church, as preserved in the narrative of the New Testament. Without meaning to disparage either the Bible or Protestantism, we lay down the truth that the Christian Church is founded primarily on Jesus Christ, and only secondarily on the Bible.—*Heermance:* Democracy in the Church, p. 1.

Did Jesus Use the Word Church? It would be strange if Jesus had not employed a word so familiar and so convenient. Yet many scholars have questioned seriously whether He really employed the term in any of his teaching concerning the organization instituted to perpetuate his work in the world. The reason for this question is that the word as attributed to Him is found but twice, both times in a single Gospel, and that the parallel passages in the other Gospels appear to be complete without it. If one will take a Harmony of the Gospels and compare the two passages (Matt. 16:13-21; 18:15-20) with their parallels in the other Gospels, it will be seen that this argument has some weight. The argument is not sustained by the manuscripts, however, and there is no sufficient reason for eliminating the two passages in which the word Church is attributed to Jesus. These two passages are, however, so incidental and so isolated that we must not read into them any doctrine not manifestly implied in them. For the most part we must learn about the New Testament Church from the writings and methods of the apostles.

How Does the New Testament Use the Terms Church and Churches? The use of the terms church and churches is consistent throughout the Acts and the Epistles. Where *a* church is referred to, a local congregation is meant. Where *the* Church is referred to, it embraces the whole body of Christians. In speaking of groups of churches, the plural is consistently used.

Local Establishment of Churches. As many as thirty-five dif-

ferent churches are—directly or indirectly—referred to by name in the New Testament, in addition to the general mention of churches "throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria" (Acts 9:31), "through Syria, and Cilicia" (Acts 15:40-41), the "churches of Asia" (I Cor. 16:19), etc. When we consider how soon after Christian churches began to be formed at all this language was used, we are naturally led to the conclusion that the apostles and their colaborers were accustomed to organize a church in every place where they found believers enough to associate themselves together for that purpose. This inference gains force when we consider that some of these churches were undoubtedly sufficiently near each other to have readily permitted their fusion into one, if it had not been thought essential to include in a single church no more believers than could regularly and conveniently unite together in the enjoyment of its privileges and the performance of its duties. For example, Cenchrea was the port and suburb of Corinth, yet there were churches at both places. Hierapolis was visible from the theater of Laodicea, and Colosse was near—some think directly between—them; while Nymphas (Col. 4:15) appears to have lived in, or near, Laodicea, and it is almost certain that Philemon was a resident of Colosse. So that there is the strongest probability that these five churches—at Hierapolis, Laodicea, Colosse, and those in the houses of Nymphas and Philemon—were all situated within a very few miles, probably within eye-shot, of each other.—*Dexter:* Congregationalism, p. 36.

Growth of Organization. It was a long time before this conception of the one Church of God, lying back of all local bodies of Christians, found expression in organization. It was long before the Church at large came under the control of a common authority and was ruled by a common government. During the period with which we are dealing, and for some generations thereafter, the unity of the Church universal was a unity of spirit rather than of body. Christians everywhere were bound together by a common faith, a common hope, and a common purpose. They were conscious of belonging to the elect people of God. But there was no central government, and no compact which obliged one part to submit to the will of another part, or of the whole.—*A. C. McGiffert:* The Apostolic Age, p. 638.

How Was the Church Related to the Temple? The relation of the Church to the temple was very remote. The Church had no altar, no sacrifice, no priesthood, no ritual. Among the twelve apostles there was not one who was or ever had been a priest. We do not know a single name in the New Testament of a man who had a share in determining the form or government of the Church, who had received sacerdotal training. Jesus was a layman. So were Peter and James and John and Paul and Barnabas and Timothy. As loyal Jews they paid visits to the temple

at the time of its great feasts, but they possessed neither experience nor inclination to pattern the early church after it, either in government or worship.

The early training of Jesus was in the local synagogue, not the temple. The same was true of every one of his disciples. Even Paul, who was educated in Jerusalem, had no training and experience in the temple apart from an ordinary Jew's share in its public worship. He was a rabbi, a teacher, not a priest.

What Was the Relation of the Church to the Synagogue? The Church sustained a very intimate relation to the synagogue. The disciples had been educated in the local synagogues, which were both places of worship and of popular education. Jesus was accustomed to worship in the synagogue in Nazareth, and going from place to place He taught in the synagogues. The apostles in their journeys did the same. When the Church began to establish separate places of meeting, their forms were closely patterned after those of the synagogue. At the first it is probable they were unconscious of any essential modification, except for the added elements in the worship of Jesus.

The Synagogue. Jesus taught in the synagogue, an institution of which we first hear in Psalm 74: 8, although it is probably older; in fact, it perhaps originated in the time of the Exile. Tiele has accordingly conjectured that the Persian mode of worship was taken as the model, since in Persia worship was not limited to one spot, but could be held in various places. ("De godsdienst van Zarathrusta," 1864, 283). But this theory is by no means necessary, as Stave has shown in detail ("Einfluss," 132 seq.). The synagogue may very well have risen merely from the needs of the Jewish people.—*Clemen:* Christianity and Its Non-Jewish Sources, 209.

How Churches Began. In the primitive institutions we doubtless see the result of the Lord's own directions; we certainly feel the breath of his Spirit. And yet there is some evidence to show that the first communities took shape on the model of the synagogue, which was the most active and ubiquitous institution of Judaism. If the *qahal* was the pattern of the church in the larger sense, the synagogue was naturally the pattern of the church in the narrower and local sense. In the LXX ecclesia and synagogue are almost interchangeable terms, and, as we saw, they were sometimes combined in the form, "the synagogue of the church." Evidently where the converts were all of Jewish origin the church

was called the synagogue (Jas. 2:2).—*R. F. Horton:* The Early Church, p. 25.

Some Synagogues Became Churches. It appears highly probable, I might say morally certain, that wherever a Jewish synagogue existed that was brought—the whole or the chief part of it—to embrace the Gospel, the apostles did not then so much form a Christian church or congregation as to make an existing one Christian, by introducing the Christian sacraments and worship, and establishing whatever regulations were requisite for the newly adopted faith, leaving the machinery of government unchanged; the rulers of synagogues, elders and other officers being already provided in the existing institutions.—*Coleman:* Church Without a Bishop, pp. 43, 44.

Synagogue and Church. As the Christian church rests historically on the Jewish church, so Christian worship and the congregational organization rest on that of the synagogue and cannot be well understood without it.—*Schaff:* History Christian Church, i, p. 456.

Synagogue Congregational. The synagogue worship was local, congregational, weekly; laymen, women, and children could and did meet every Sabbath to hear the law and the prophets and to offer praise and prayer. A building suited to the needs of the place was built. The worship consisted in reading the law and prophets, the nineteen prayers, the chanting, the preaching or expounding of the Scriptures, and the amen responded by the people. "Any Jew of age might get up to read the lesson, offer prayer, and address the congregation." Each synagogue elected its own officers, the ruler and his two associates, the three almoners, or deacons, and the council. "Each synagogue formed an independent republic, but kept up a regular correspondence with other synagogues. It was also a civil and religious court, and had power to excommunicate and to scourge offenders." All the affairs of a synagogue, worship and government, were under the exclusive control of laymen. No priest had any part in them. Each synagogue was independent of the rest, whether taken singly or collectively.—*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, p. 34.

How Was the Church Related to Gentile Organizations?

The significance of this question was wholly overlooked or ignored by early writers on church polity, who assumed a Judaic origin for the entire organization of the Apostolic Church. To a large extent the development of the early Church was in lands outside Palestine, and among people who had little knowledge of either temple or synagogue. Studies of modern writers have shown that the primitive congregations in Gentile lands were probably much influenced in their form of organization by the guilds and other organizations of which Christians in these lands had previously been members.

The Church and Gentile Organizations. It is almost impossible to suppose that these Gentile Christians, who had no previous experience in the working of the Jewish eldership system, either in its developed form in the synagogue presbyterate, or in its primitive seven men of the Hebrew village community, could easily understand its application to Christian societies of which they were members. The probabilities are that the organization in the churches owed very little to the Jewish eldership, but had special roots of its own, and that we are directed to these roots by this name of bishop or overseer. This distinction did not escape the keen eye of Dr. Lightfoot. He says that the term bishop is applied only to office-bearers in Gentile or Hellenic churches. He can only conjecture how it came into use, and from what organization it was borrowed.

"But," he says, "if we may assume that the directors of the religious and social clubs among the heathen were commonly called bishops, it would occur naturally, if not to the Gentile Christians themselves at all events to their heathen associates, as a fit designation for the presiding members of the new society. The infant Church of Christ, which appeared to the Jews as a synagogue, would be regarded by the heathen as a confraternity."

It was reserved for Dr. Hatch to lead us far beyond the halting statements of Dr. Lightfoot. He has made use of the stores of information accumulated by the recent study of ancient inscriptions, and has collected evidences of the number and objects of associations or confraternities existing under the empire. There were trade guilds, dramatic, athletic, and burial clubs. Many cities had municipal councils. Above all, there existed religious associations for the practice of the rites of a special cult. Just as within a common Judaism sects and parties had their separate synagogues, so under the universal state religion of the Roman Empire there were many forms of pagan religion and many modes of worship. The state religion had its colleges of priests, its temples, and its public sacrifices; those private religions had their confraternities. The Christians were always exhorted to unite in close fellowship with each other in a fashion not without external resemblance to those social societies or religious confraternities. A large portion of the Gentile Christian converts must have once belonged to such associations, and were familiar with their working. When we find that, among a number of other terms used, the general meeting of an association was called an ecclesia and a synod and that the officials were sometimes called episcopi, we have almost as strong evidence to connect the organization of Gentile Christian communities with those sodalitia, municipal councils, and confraternities of the empire, as we have to establish a relation between the organization of the Jewish Christians with the synagogue presbyterate.—*T. M. Lindsay:* Article in London Contemporary Review, October, 1895.

That the New Testament Church inherited anything from fraternal, municipal, and commercial organizations among the Gentiles was hardly suspected by earlier authorities in church polity. Our knowledge on this subject is

all recent, but remarkably suggestive. The Romans had invented that artificial person known in law as the corporation. Roman laws sometimes favored and at other times sought to repress and even to exterminate corporations within the empire. Beside these bodies of which the law took notice were social and fraternal clubs and labor unions, as we now would call them. The progress of Christianity brought it more and more into contact with Gentile life. As Christianity among the Jews related itself to and took on much of the form and color of the synagogue, so Christianity among the Gentiles, who had no synagogues, followed more or less closely the not dissimilar but usually free and democratic type of organization of these guilds and societies, of which many of the newly converted Christians were already members.

Churches Evolved from Gentile Guilds. There are some, no doubt, who will think that to account for the organization of the Church in this way is to detract from the nobility of its birth, or from the divinity of its life. There are some who can see a divinity in the thunder-peal, which they cannot see in the serenity of a summer noon, or in the growth of the flowers of spring. . . . And so, it may be—nor is it a derogation from its grandeur to say that it was—out of antecedent and, if you will, lower forms, out of existing elements of human institutions, by the action of existing forces of human society, swayed as you will by the breathing of the Divine Breath, controlled as you will by the Providence which holds in its hand the wayward wills of men no less than the courses of the stars, but still out of elements, and by the action of forces, analogous to those which have resulted in other institutions of society, and other forms of government, came into being that widest and strongest and most enduring of institutions which bears the sacred name of the Holy Catholic Church. The divinity which clings to it is the divinity of order.—*Hatch:* Bampton Lectures, pp. 19 et seq.

Is the Church the Embodiment of a Social Ideal? The spirit of the individual inhabits and expresses itself through a body. So, also, the organic social life of those who have attained to like precious faith in Christ embodies and expresses that life. The Christian does not and cannot realize the full meaning of his religion in isolation. Part, but not all, of the Christian life belongs to the individual soul.

Not only does the social life of Christians demand or-

ganization, but such organization multiplies the power and efficiency of Christians. Carlyle truly said, "A man, be the heavens praised, is sufficient for himself; yet were ten men, united in love, capable of being and doing what ten thousand singly would fail in!"

According to the plain teaching of the New Testament, as interpreted by Congregationalists, the kingdom of God which Jesus established is a divine democracy. The law given from heaven was ratified by the whole body of the people. The Church is the embodiment of the social ideal of the Gospel; and that ideal is not something secondary, imposed upon the individual life by force of authority, but normally belonging to it.

It is increasingly evident that the early Christians interpreted their life in the Gospel socially rather than in terms of isolated personal experience. After the departure of Jesus they found themselves bereft indeed but not isolated. With no form of prescribed organization, they yet possessed a certain corporate unity. Their experiences were not wholly personal. To a large degree they were experiences held in common as members of a beloved community. Membership in the church was all but inevitable to them with their views and experiences.

The Christian in the Church. The Christian must be a member of Christendom, of the ecclesia, of the Church. Hence the question: Where is the ecclesia? The apostolic age answered the question thus: Where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there is the ecclesia, the church. For Christ has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). The Lord is risen indeed! He is alive for evermore! That is the victorious creed of Christendom. The Lord is in the midst of them who believe on Him, in his divine omnipresence, He that is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty. Therefore He is and works everywhere wheresoever two or three are gathered together in his name. Where Christ is there is the Church. The Church appears and works in every congregation of believers.—*Rudolf Sohm:* Outlines of Church History, p. 32.

Christ and the Church. The common sense of the Christian Church had three problems to solve. First: It was loyal to the universal spiritual community; and upon this loyalty, according to its view, salvation depended. But this universal community must be something concrete and practically efficacious. Hence the

visible Church had to be organized as the appearance on earth of God's kingdom. For what the parables had life mysterious about the object and the life of love, an authoritative interpretation, valid for believers of those times, must be found, and was found in the visible Church.

Secondly, The life, the unity, the spirit of the Church had meanwhile to be identified with the person and with the spirit of the risen and ascended Lord, whom the visions of the first disciples had made henceforth a central fact in the belief of the Church.

The supernatural being whose body was now the Church, whose spirit was thus identified with the will and with the mind of a community, had once, as man, walked the earth, had really suffered and died. But since He had risen and ascended, henceforth—precisely because He was as the spirit whose body was this community, the Church—He was divine. Such was the essential article of the new faith.—*Royce:* The Problem of Christianity, Vol. I, pp. 201, 202.

How Were the New Testament Churches Founded? The New Testament churches were founded by the coming together of the followers of Christ in local communities, in which these scattered disciples were gathered. Sometimes the formation of a church was preceded by the preaching of an apostle or by the visit of other disciples from Jerusalem. Sometimes Christians, fleeing from persecution, gathered about them other Christians in the places where they found themselves, and began their small and obscure assemblies without definite leadership. In some instances, a strong church came into being without the recorded visit or apparent knowledge of any member of the apostolic group. The church in Antioch appears to have been such a church, and as thus established, before it received formal recognition in Jerusalem, it ordained its own missionaries to preach the gospel in other places (Acts 13: 1-3). While this church submitted important questions to councils representative of the churches, including that in Jerusalem, it was in no way subject to that or to any other outside organization. The church at Antioch at this time was larger, stronger, and more important to the future of Christianity than that of Jerusalem or any other one church.

With What Organization Was the Church Established? So far as the Christian Church is authorized or implied in the words of Jesus, the organization appears exceedingly

simple and flexible. His one definite word concerning government indicates that final authority rested with the local congregation. "If he will not hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18: 17).

The Universal Church. We maist constantlie belief that God preservit, instructit, multiplait, honourit, decorirt and frome death callit to lyfe His Kirk in all aiges, fra Adam till the coming of Chryst Jesus in the flesche.—*John Knox:* Works, ii, pp. 98, 99.

The Local Church. The right to enact their laws, and the entire government of the church, was voted in each individual association of which the church was composed.—Allgemeine Kirche Zeitung, 1833, cited in Coleman's Church Without a Bishop, p. 25.

No Central Government. There is nothing in the New Testament to suggest that the apostles intended that separate Christian assemblies should be drawn into a larger ecclesiastical organization under a central government. The church at Jerusalem had no control over the church at Antioch; nor were Jerusalem and Antioch under the government of any supreme ecclesiastical authority. The churches which Paul and Barnabas founded in Lycaonia, Pisidia, and Pamphilia on their first missionary journey were independent of the church at Antioch and of each other. In every city there was a church, and in every church there were elders (Acts 14: 21-23), but the narrative of Luke gives the impression that every church stood apart. No attempt was made to bring them into any ecclesiastical confederation or to place them under a common government. In the account of Paul's second visit to this part of Asia Minor we are told that the "churches"—not "the church"—"were strengthened in the faith and increased in numbers daily" (Acts 16: 5). They were standing apart still, and Paul did nothing to draw them together.—*Dale:* Cong. Manual, p. 71.

Did the Apostles Rule the Churches? The apostles gave suggestions and directions, but government was by the local church. Not only is it true that the apostles did not assume ecclesiastical authority, but it is apparent that there were those who would have resented it if it had been assumed. When Paul was constrained to give the grounds of his apostleship, he caused it to be distinctly understood that he acknowledged no ecclesiastical authority for his ministry. In his epistle to the Galatians he declares this truth with unmistakable emphasis (Gal. 1: 15-17).

Later, when Paul went to Jerusalem, he declares that those who were in positions of influence there had no authority over him. He names James, Peter and John as those "who seemed to be pillars," but he says, "whatsoever

they were, it maketh no matter to me; God respecteth no man's person." The liberty which Paul claimed for himself in this matter, he claimed for his fellow Christians also. That liberty involved complete freedom from ecclesiastical tyranny, even though it had been that of the original apostles of Christ. Still further, when controversies arose, as one soon arose concerning Peter's fellowship with Gentiles, Peter claimed no authority for himself or for the apostles beyond that of his brethren in the church, but defended his conduct before the apostles and the brethren (Acts 11:1). The whole body joined in the expression of approval of that which Peter had done.

The sending forth of representatives from one church to another was not done by the apostles but by the church, as is shown in the mission of Barnabas from the church at Jerusalem to that at Antioch (Acts 11:32).

Our most complete illustration of the way in which the early Church settled any great question of concern to the whole Christian body is given to us in Acts 15, where representatives from various churches gathered at Jerusalem to consider the new questions which had arisen out of the conversion of Gentiles and the organization of churches composed of other than Jewish Christians. This chapter and the account which Paul gives of the same incident in his epistle to the Galatians furnish a complete refutation of any claim that the apostles attempted to exercise ecclesiastical authority, or that such authority would have been acknowledged by the churches (Acts 15; Galatians 2).

John Milton's Assertion. John Milton shows conclusively that the apostles could not possibly have been bishops by office, i. e. moderators or governors of the churches, and so that modern diocesan bishops are no successors of the apostles.—Eikonoklates, p. 135.

Apostles Not Officers in Local Church. Though they had certain duties to perform, yet they were not officers in any churches.—*Leonard Bacon:* Church Manual, p. 36.

The Apostles Not Ecclesiastical Rulers. They had bishoprics, according to the Scriptures; but these had little or no analogy to the supposed duties and prerogatives of modern prelates.—*Cummings:* Cong. Dict., Art. Apostles.

Had the Apostolic Church a Hierarchy? The Apostolic Church had no hierarchy; it had no priesthood, no sacrifice, it recognized no ecclesiastical authority above the local church. All hierarchal functions that have manifested themselves in the Church originated after the time of the apostles and in contravention of the apostolic method and spirit. The only priests mentioned in the New Testament are the Jewish priests, and they are regarded with little favor; Jesus, the great High Priest who offered a complete and final sacrifice (Hebrews 3:1), and the whole company of believers (Rev. 1:6; 20:6).

No Sacerdotal System. Above all, it has no sacerdotal system. It interposes no sacrificial tribe or class between God and man, by whose intervention alone God is reconciled and man forgiven. Each individual member holds personal communion with the divine head.—*Bishop Lightfoot* on the Ministry, p. 179.

How Were the New Testament Churches Governed? The New Testament contains no complete manual for church government. The references to government are incidental, and are found scattered through the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, particularly those of Paul. These references, however, are significant, both for what they state and what they imply.

The first official act of the Church as a body was that of selecting a successor to Judas. The new apostle was not chosen by his fellow apostles, acting separate and apart from the Church. The Apostolic College was not a self-perpetuating body. The whole body of the church, to the number of 120, were gathered together, and Peter laid the matter before the congregation, who selected two candidates as the expression of the preference of the whole body of that local church and prayed for divine guidance in the choice of one of these two (Acts 1:15-26).

The next occasion where the Church is known to have acted in the choice of officers was that of the election of deacons. Here again the apostles called the entire congregation of the disciples together, and did not themselves assume the right either to compel the appointment of a

new officiary, or to determine who the new officers should be, but laid before the congregation the expediency of the matter, and charged the entire body with the responsibility of choosing the deacons (Acts 6:1-6).

The story of the first preaching of the Gospel outside of Jerusalem is significant in the fact of its entire silence as to any centralization of authority in the apostles or any group of their successors. Christian men went everywhere preaching the Gospel, and wherever they went little groups of believers sprang up who called themselves of "the way." The first name of Christianity was really "the Road" (Acts 19:9, 23; 24:14, 22; 16:17; 18:26). The disciples first gained recognition in the outer world as a body distinct from Judaism and entitled to a name, in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Some of their little detached communities, especially in the larger towns, were visited occasionally by a Christian leader of distinction, who gave advice on local problems, but they governed themselves. But in sympathy they counted themselves members of a common communion.

Each Congregation a Church. The New Testament, looking at the principle of the new life, and the high calling of the Christian, styles all believers brethren, saints, a spiritual temple, a peculiar people, a holy and royal priesthood. It is remarkable that Peter in particular should apply the term *clerus* not to the ministerial order as distinct from the laity, but to the community; thus regarding every Christian congregation as a spiritual tribe of Levi, a peculiar people, holy to the Lord.—*Schaff:* Church History, i, 486.

What Were the Officers of the Apostolic Church? The officers of the Apostolic Church were bishops and deacons. The bishops were also called elders (presbyters) or pastors (shepherds). Only these two kinds of permanent offices are known in the New Testament. The lists of diversified "gifts" in I Corinthians 12:28-31 and Ephesians 4:11-12 are not catalogues of distinct and permanent offices. There is no scriptural evidence of a fixed gulf between elders and bishops, nor any reason to believe that deacons constituted a lower order of the clergy.

Two Kinds of Officers. It remaineth therefore, that the ordi-

nary Officers of the Church which are to continue to the comming of Christ Jesus, are either Elders (whom the Apostles calleth also Bishops, Titus 1: 5, 7; Acts 20: 17-28) or Deacons.—*John Cotton:* Way of the Churches, p. 10.

Bishops and Deacons. When we look at the settled state of the churches, after charisms had generally ceased—when the minds of Christians were no longer elevated and enlightened by extraordinary influences of the Spirit—when all that remained of the gifted brethren appeared in the elders, men favored with less remarkable manifestations; we shall find no other office-bearers besides them, than those attending to the secular affairs. Bishops and deacons were intended to continue in the churches of Christ; other offices were temporary.—*Davidson:* Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament, p. 153.

Pastors Were Bishops. Finding the first Epistle to Timothy passing from the Directions for the good Conduct of Bishops, immediately to those for that of Deacons, without any mention of Presbyters distinct from them, is it not as evident as a Noonday Sun can make any thing in the world unto us, that there are only those Two Ordinary Officers instituted by the Lord for the Service of His Churches, and that there is no Institution for any other Bishops, but the Pastors of Particular Congregations?—*Cotton Mather:* Some Seasonable Inquiries (A. D. 1723), p. 2.

Bishops the Same as Elders. All the distinction we can admit between bishops and presbyters then, is that the latter was particularly the name of dignity, the former the name designating the function, or particular sphere of activity. . . . Besides these, we find only one other church office in the apostolic age—that of deacons.—*Neander:* History of the Christian Church, Vol. I, pp. 186, 188.

A Pope's Testimony. We consider the eldership and the deaconship as the sacred orders. Here indeed are all that the primitive church had. For these alone have we apostolic authority.—*Urban I.*

Are We Sure of the Identity of Bishops and Presbyters?

Congregationalists are certain of this identity and so are the scholars of other denominations.

Bishops and Presbyters. The public functions of religion were solely intrusted to the established ministers of the Church, the bishops and the presbyters; two appellations which, in their first origin, appear to have distinguished the same office, and the same order of persons. The name of presbyter was expressive of their age, or rather of their gravity and wisdom. The title of bishop denoted their inspection over the faith and manners of Christians who were committed to their pastoral care.—*Gibbon:* Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

Bishop and Presbyter Identical. The scanty and unsatisfactory evidence of the first century points to the practical permanence of the *episcopos* as already usual, but is inconsistent with the idea that the *episcopos* was considered as separate from his co-presbyters,

as he continued for centuries to call them. He was only a presbyter on whom certain duties had been imposed.—*Ramsay:* Church in the Roman Empire, p. 368.

From "The Morning Star of the Reformation." I boldly assert one thing, namely, that in the primitive church, or in the time of Paul, two orders of the clergy were sufficient; that is, a priest and a deacon. In like manner I maintain that in the time of Paul, presbyter and bishop were names of the same office. All other degrees and orders have their origin in the pride of Cæsar.—*John Wycklif* (1324-1384).

Martin Luther's Testimony. It is proved that bishop and presbyter are the same; therefore by divine law, the Pope is neither superior to the bishop nor the bishop superior to the presbyters.—Lutheri Opera, i, p. 279.

John Calvin's Testimony. In giving the name of bishops, presbyters and pastors indiscriminately to those who govern churches, I have done it on the authority of Scripture, which uses the words as synonymous.—Institutes, iii, p. 64.

An Eminent Episcopalian. The English version of Acts 20:28 has hardly dealt fairly with the sacred text in rendering *episcopous* overseers; whereas it ought there, as in all other places, to have been bishops, that the fact that elders and bishops having been apostolically synonymous might be apparent to the ordinary English reader, which now it is not.—*Dean Alford:* Commentary, Vol. II, p. 250.

Bishops and Presbyters. The weight of evidence has rendered practically indisputable the identity of the primitive bishops and presbyters; that, in the course of the second century, the bishop came to stand above the rest of the presbyters of the local church; that "the episcopate grew by the force of circumstances, in the order of Providence, to satisfy a felt want"; that "the supremacy of the episcopate was the result of the struggle with Gnosticism"; that "dioceses in the later sense of the term did not yet exist" in the fourth century; and that the first diocese was that of which Alexandria was the center.—*Vice-Primpal Edwin Hatch:* Origin of Early Christian Churches, pp. 38, 82, 83, 98, 99, 215, 194, 195.

Clement of Rome. The interchangeable use of bishop and presbyter is illustrated in many of the Fathers, as in Clement of Rome, who, writing to protest against the summary removal of certain presbyters in the church at Corinth, declares that "those presbyters who finished their course before now are blessed," that is, for having died before they lived to suffer this injustice, and describes the honor of the office of those presbyters in extended discussions like this:

Our apostles know also that through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife for the office of bishop. For this cause, therefore, since they had received perfect foreknowledge, they appointed those who have been already mentioned. . . . We consider therefore that it is not just to remove from their ministry those who were appointed by them, or later on by other eminent men with the consent of the whole church, and have ministered to the flock of Christ without blame, humbly, peacefully and dis-

interestedly. . . . For our sin is not small if we eject from the episcopate those who have blamelessly and holily offered its sacrifices.——Clement i, 44. Continuing the argument through many succeeding sections of his letter he also speaks of the attempt to remove these "bishops" as "a revolt against the presbyters" (47); and exhorts "Let the flock of Christ be at peace along with the appointed presbyters" (54); and again (in 57), "Do ye who began this sedition submit yourselves to the presbyters." The apostles received the Gospel from our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus the Christ was sent from God. The Christ therefore is from God, and the apostles from the Christ. . . . They preached from district to district, and they appointed their first converts, testing them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons to the future believers. And this was no new method, for many years before had bishops and deacons been written of; for the Scripture saith, "I will establish their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith."—*Clement* of Rome, i, 42.

Did Every Church Have a Bishop and Also Presbyters? At first no one church appears to have had a single officer called either presbyter or bishop; rather there were groups of such men in each of the larger churches, sometimes called by the one name, sometimes by the other, sometimes by both interchangeably, but in no case did these bishops or presbyters exercise individual dominion over a group of churches. Each group belonged to a single church and was chosen out of its own membership.

The apostles and the itinerant evangelists occupied a somewhat unique position by reason of their travels among the churches, but officially they were merely elders. Peter did not say, "The elders among you I exhort, being over you as a bishop," but "The elders among you I exhort, who also am an elder." Paul's instruction to Timothy and Titus was not to ordain a bishop in every district, but to ordain bishops in every city, that is, to assist the local church in finding competent leaders.

Gradually, however, the two names came to stand for a somewhat different function. In a local presbytery or group of elders some one would be chosen to preside or to represent the church in matters of particular importance, and in time this officer came to be spoken of as the *episcopos*. He did not cease to be a presbyter, nor did this special function that came to be implied in the title exalt him above

his fellow presbyters. He was the presiding presbyter, *primus inter pares.*

Why Were There Two Titles for One Office? Such knowledge as has been available toward an answer to this question is relatively recent. Apparently the two titles grew up somewhat independently. The title *episcopos* appears to have come first into use in Gentile churches, where it was derived from the familiar title of the presiding officer in secular organizations. It has been common to speak of James, the brother of the Lord, as bishop of Jerusalem, but we have no reason to think that the title bishop was used in Jerusalem in the first beginnings of the Church. Elder was the more familiar term in the churches that grew out of Judaism. It meant primarily an aged man, just as senator does, but had come to be applied to men of experience called into positions of responsibility and counsel, and was a term frequently used in Jewish life. The Council at Jerusalem described in Acts 15 provided for a difference in the standards of Gentile and Jewish churches. While the differences agreed upon related wholly to the extent of their observance of the Jewish law, it would have been in nowise strange if those differences had been carried also into their forms of organization. There is not the slightest reason to suppose that any of the apostles regarded the form of organization as of such prime importance that all churches must be organized on an identical basis. The local churches were independent, self-governing bodies, and their forms and methods were more or less flexible, but there was an important system of intercourse among the early churches. Not only did persecution drive many of the early Christians from Jerusalem, but the conditions of Jewish life had already scattered large numbers of the Jews, and continued to scatter Jewish Christians, through all parts of the Roman Empire. Wherever the first preachers of Christianity went they were likely to find little companies of Jewish people, generally with a synagogue, with its free and democratic worship

and government, subject to no system of external or centralized supervision and control. The synagogues themselves differed more or less, and the churches that in many cases grew out of them exhibited certain characteristics of individuality, but as the churches detached themselves from the synagogues or grew up as they did in some cases with no antecedent relation to particular synagogues, they developed a character of their own, and a tendency toward uniformity which was stimulated by rather frequent visits from traveling evangelists and sometimes from apostles. While none of these men assumed the control of local churches, their advice was naturally held in somewhat high regard. That it carried with it no authority is sometimes almost painfully evident, but it was a counterbalancing check on excessive individuality in church organization and life.

Bishop Not Originally an Ecclesiastical Officer. The better knowledge of the primitive church which modern study of Christian institutions has brought to us, according to Professor Hatch in his Bampton Lectures, is showing that the "historic episcopacy" was not originally the ecclesiastical institution that is claimed for it, but was simply an office in the primitive church, the bishop being in the beginning financial administrator or administrators of the Christian societies. "There was a general tendency," says Professor Hatch, "in the early centuries of the Christian era, toward the formation of associations, especially of religious associations. It was consequently natural that the early converts to Christianity should combine together. It was a time of great social strain, and the pressure of poverty made almsgiving in these societies a primary duty. The administrative officers, by whom funds were received and alms dispensed, were called *epimelatai* or *episcopoi*, the last named of which was adopted by the corresponding officers of the Christian societies." Originally this was the name of a body of officers, but in time came to be in the Christian societies the title of a single officer, the *episcopos*. "This was due," says Professor Hatch, "to the fact that the offerings of the early Christians were made publicly to the president in the assembly, who was also primarily responsible for their distribution." The importance of the functions of the president as chief administrator increased largely as the Christian societies grew. The prelatical character of the *episcopos* or bishop was of gradual development.—*Canon Henson:* Westminster Sermons, 1910.

James Not a Bishop. That it was Jesus' relations who were pushed to the front cannot be merely the consequence of the high esteem in which James "the Just" was held. The new constitution of the Church in Jerusalem, with James at the head, and pres-

byters, possibly twelve (see Zahn, p. 297 note) must be understood in such a way that James corresponds to the high priest (see Hegesippus in Eusebius ii, 23, 26, "he alone was permitted to enter into the holy place") and the presbyters to the Sanhedrin (see Schurer, Jewish People in the Time of Christ, Div. I, Vol. I, pp. 165 et seq., 149 et seq.). Perhaps the other Christian communities in Palestine already possessed an organization based on elders, and this may have exercised some influence on Jerusalem. But James, as chief ruler, had a unique position above all the other presbyters. His throne was still shown in the time of Eusebius (Hist. Eccl., vii, 19) and even the Gentile-Christian tradition, not the Jewish-Christian tradition only, mentions him as first Bishop of Jerusalem, appointed by Christ *and* the apostles. But that James bore the title "bishop" is open to strong doubt, since the title does not occur within Judaism.—*Harnack:* Const. and Law of Church, pp. 34-35.

What Is the Historic Episcopate? Into discussions of the reunion of Christendom come frequent references to "the historic episcopate." The fourth condition of reunion as offered by the Lambeth Quadrilateral was "the historic episcopate locally adapted." Just how it was to be locally adapted was a question difficult to determine. In the Anglican Church the historic episcopate is vested in bishops elevated into a rank above other clergy; in Presbyterian and Congregational churches the earlier conception of the episcopate as vested in the local pastorate obtains.

That in the New Testament the bishop and the elder are one and the same is self-evident, and all but universally conceded. But modern study of the development of New Testament origins shows us that while the term elder was distinctly Jewish, that of bishop was as definitely Gentile. Not only did not Jesus use the word bishop, so far as we know, but it is entirely likely that He never heard it used. The term came into the early Church by way of its Gentile organizations. In the mystery religions and in the trade unions the presiding officer was the bishop.

These very recently known facts make most former discussions of the historic episcopate seem rather foolish. Instead of the apostles assuming the title immediately after the resurrection, and causing the name to be spread from Jerusalem as a center, the term was one with which the apostles became gradually, and perhaps reluctantly, familiar

through contact with the Gentile world. It appears to have been true that there were bishops in the churches recently formed from heathenism a considerable time before there were any bishops in Jerusalem or Judea.

Although our knowledge of the evolution of the early Church is very fragmentary, it is apparent that the tendency in Jerusalem was to keep as closely to Jewish forms as possible, and there was an evident movement there to shape the organization of that central church after the organization of the temple, which certainly had no notion of bishops.

The "historic episcopate" began in heathenism; was merged into Gentile Christianity in its contact with the heathen world as standing for an idea essentially similar to that for which the leadership of the Church was to stand. The bishops in the Gentile-Christian churches were to those churches what the elders were to the Jewish-Christian churches. This was the situation at the time when the greater part of our New Testament was written, and therefore the two terms are used interchangeably. In subsequent evolution one term rose in dignity above the other, and it was the Gentile and not the Jewish term that took the higher rank.

V. ECCLESIASTICAL EVOLUTION

How Did the Church Lose Its Apostolic Simplicity? The changes from apostolic simplicity were gradual, and occurred under a wide variety of influences. They were well under way when the close affiliation of the Church with the Roman government completed the process by placing the throne of the Bishop of Rome side by side with that of the emperor. But in the beginning it was not so. Each church was independent, and each bishop was a member of his own local church.

The change was gradual, and much more rapid in some sections than in others. It came first in Asia Minor, and it was several centuries before it came to its fruition in the important church in Alexandria. But the process is easily traced.

First, in the local church, one of the several presbyters rose above the others as chief presbyter, or presiding presbyter. In the churches where the title bishop had been used of all, it came gradually to be applied only to the foremost of the men in the ministry. Then in a district the principal church rose to a certain position of leadership and authority, and its chief pastor exercised a certain brotherly oversight, which in time came to be an ecclesiastical control over the neighboring smaller, and often dependent, churches and minsters. The "metropolitan" was a superintending bishop of a district tributary to his large central church. The presbyters in his own church fell into a rank subordinate to his own; the presbyters of the neighboring churches surrendered their right to be called bishops of the same rank with himself.

As the large and centrally located churches rose first in influence and then in authority over the smaller churches in their respective districts, distinctions arose among those larger churches and their bishops. There were greater bishops and lesser bishops, among whom gradually the

bishop nearest to the sources of political power gradually came to assume an authority above all other bishops. The center moved from Jerusalem to Rome, and all necessary legends and traditions were invented to give to that bishopric whatever honor was necessary to its authority. The Bishop of Rome became the bishop above all other bishops.

Rather swift was the evolution, all things considered, yet it took centuries to complete it. When it was finished, the New Testament simplicity was gone, and instead was a great ecclesiastical machine, with a great gulf fixed between laity and clergy, and with the ministry rising in successive tiers, rank above rank. The deacons were no longer laymen, chosen for their good repute and business ability to care for the secular interests of the church, but a lower order of the clergy; and above them rose the priesthood in higher and narrowing ranks of priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and, above them all, the Bishop of Rome, wearing the fisherman's ring to remind himself that he was the successor of Peter, and proclaiming himself "the servant of the servants of God," that under that title he might rule them all with hand as rigorous as that of the Roman emperor, who himself often trembled at the feet of this exalted earthly monarch.

Thus out of simple democracy rose the mighty monarchy of the papacy; and when the Reformation came, neither Luther in Germany, who believed in Congregationalism, nor the king-ridden Church of England restored the primitive simplicity of the apostolic order. That was reserved for the Anabaptists and the Puritans.

Luther and the Congregational Principle. In spite of the high esteem in which Luther had always held civic authority and the state, his original intention was to reconstruct the church on the simple basis of government by the congregation. He had visions of a congregational life founded upon fellowship and on principles of Christian liberty, fraternity, and equality. It was further his idea that the national element should find free expression, only the nation then meant the Roman empire of German nationality, and he had in view an improvement in the general economic condition of the country, an increase in its culture, and the upraising of downtrodden classes. Not that these were in his eyes separate

and independent ideals; rather he was convinced that a return to the Gospel would inevitably bring about their realization. Therefore there was no immediate need to press them; he could afford to wait if necessary; only the Gospel must have free course.—*Harnack:* The Social Gospel, p. 51.

How the Changes Came. Beneath the bishop or pastor grew up the order of the presbyters, who gradually assumed the more important functions of the bishop, while the bishop became more closely identified with the administration of ecclesiastical affairs. But above the bishop there rose the metropolitans, who in their turn were subjected in the eastern churches to the patriarch; the impersonization of the cause of national unity. But the spirit of nationality was not operative in the western church at the time when it was the most potent factor in oriental Christendom. In the West, therefore, in place of national unity as the controlling motive, there was substituted the unity of ecclesiastical empire, where the Bishop of Rome developed slowly into the Roman papacy.—*Allen:* Christian Institutions, p. 6.

By degrees a systematic organization sprang up, by which neighboring churches were grouped together for the purpose of consultation and self-government. The chief city of each district had the civil rank of the "metropolis," or mother city. There the local synods naturally met, and the bishop—styled metropolitan, from his position—took the lead in the deliberations, as *primus inter pares*, and acted as the representative of his brother bishops in their intercourse with other churches. Thus, though all bishops were nominally equal, a superior dignity and authority came by general consent to be vested in the metropolitans, which, when the churches became established, received the stamp of ecclesiastical authority. A little higher dignity was assigned to the bishops of the chief seats of government, such as Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and subsequently Constantinople; and among these, the Bishop of Rome naturally had the precedence.—Encyclopedia Britannica, p. 848.

Did the Changes Begin Soon? How early modifications of the original order began finds an interesting illustration in the prominence that soon was given to "the brothers of the Lord." The casual reader of the book of Acts is likely to miss this phenomenon in New Testament life because of a coincidence in the use of names. Peter, James and John were the apostolic group most closely associated with Jesus; and in the book of Acts, as also in Paul's letter to the Galatians, we find Peter, James and John in the acknowledged leadership of the community at Jerusalem, but with James in so special a position of prominence that tradition assigns to him the title of Bishop of Jerusalem. But this was not the same James. James, the son of Zeb-

edee, who belonged to the apostolic group, was murdered by Herod (Acts 12:1). The James who speedily became prominent in the leadership of the Jerusalem congregation was a wholly different James, the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:19 and 2:9). That this James, a new arrival, took high rank is evident not only in the influence of his words at the apostolic council (Acts 15:13-22), but also in the fact that messages from Jerusalem asserting the perpetual authority of the Mosaic law, even upon Gentile converts, came not avowedly from the whole apostolic group but from James (Gal. 2:12). Even Peter seems to have been over-awed by the surprising place of leadership which had been assumed by this relatively new convert, and Paul took him sharply to task for it in Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14). It goes without saying that Jesus, who acknowledged no kinship in the church beyond his spiritual relationship to all believers (Luke 8:19-21), could have promulgated no scheme whose purpose was to make a place for his own as yet unconverted brother; but James, who evidently became a convert after the ministry of Jesus had ended (John 7:5), secured by his personal relationship, what he was able to hold by force of personality, a position in the apostolic group not even second to that of Peter.

The position of James in Jerusalem shows, first, that there were no such hard and fast limits to the apostolic group as has sometimes been imagined. That group was elastic enough to admit Paul, who certainly did not derive his orders from the Twelve, and Barnabas (Acts 14:4; I Cor. 9:5, 6), and more obscure men like Andronicus and Junias (Romans 16:7). It also shows that there was great liberty of local adaptation, and no necessity whatever as the first Christians understood it, of providing for a succession according to an artificial and predetermined scheme.

The Relatives of Jesus. According to an old and well-attested tradition, with which Acts 12 fits in, the Twelve remained twelve years in Jerusalem; then by the second persecution, viz., that of Herod, in which James the son of Zebedee fell, they were scattered, and afterwards returned only temporarily to Jerusalem.

But they had already worked as missionaries in Judea from Jerusalem as a center, or had confirmed the missionary work of others (as Peter and John in Samaria, Peter in Philistia). Now, in all probability, a total change of constitution took place in Jerusalem. James, the brother of the Lord, and presbyters took the place of the government of the Twelve which prefigured the messianic kingdom. (The Acts does not note the transformation but presupposes it: see 12:17; 11:30; 13:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 21:18). It is certain that members of the college of the Twelve (Peter and John) who were still present from time to time in Jerusalem, had not lost their authority (Gal. 2; Acts 15; Acts 11:30 refers only to the presbyters, Acts 15 to the apostles and presbyters, Acts 21 to James and the presbyters). The new constitution must be estimated from three points of view:

(1) It gives prominence to the relations of Jesus (after James' death the cousin of Jesus, Simeon, was chosen in Jerusalem according to Eusebius 2:11, by the apostles still living, and also by disciples and relations of Jesus). Other relations of Jesus also came to the front in Palestinian communities. Jesus' relations are called *desposyni*, i. e., those "belonging to the master." The old Jewish-Christian list of bishops of Jerusalem with its many names is perhaps also a list of the relations of Jesus: Hegesippus, Julius Africanus; see Zahn, Forsch, vi, pp. 225 et seq.).—*Harnack:* The Constitution and Law of the Church, pp. 32-33.

Influence of Brothers of the Lord. The brothers of the Lord appear to have been often with the apostles, although they were distinguished from them. Their authority was at least equal to that of the apostles. These two groups constituted, in the nascent Church, a sort of aristocracy, based entirely upon the greater or less intimacy which they had had with the Master. It was these men whom St. Paul called "pillars" of the Church of Jerusalem. We see, moreover, that no distinctions of ecclesiastical hierarchy were yet in existence. The title was nothing; the personal authority was everything.—*Ernest Renan:* The Apostles, p. 111.

Did Jesus During the Forty Days Establish a Formal Organization? There has been considerable recent attempt on the part of High Church partisans in the Episcopal Church to derive an authority for their system of government from the silence of the forty days after the resurrection. These claims are met now and then in somewhat pretentious works, but more frequently appear in sectarian tracts, from one of which the following is quoted:

An Amazing Reconstruction of History. A. D. 33. According to the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the Lord, during the forty days intervening between his resurrection and ascension, instructs the apostles concerning the Kingdom of God, a term synonomous with the Church of God, in other words, He instructs them concerning his church, its form, order, worship, government, organization, doctrine, etc.

A. D. 35. The apostles, in obedience to Christ's instruction, separate and establish the church with bishops, priests, and deacons, a liturgical worship, common prayer, etc., in different countries.

A. D. 35 to A. D. 67. The Church of England is founded in Britain, the Church of Egypt in Egypt, the Church of Rome in Rome, the Church of Africa in Africa, and other national Catholic and Apostolic Churches are founded in other parts of the world.

A. D. 70. Bishop Clement, of Rome, whose name St. Paul says is written in the Book of Life, says St. Paul went to the extreme limit of the west, which included Britain.

. . . . . .

From these notes you can readily see that the Protestant Episcopal Church of this country is the same church in origin as when called the Church of England in the colonies in A. D. 1607; it is the same in origin as hen it first united with the first Roman Mission in England in A. D. 673; it is the same in origin as the church which sent bishops to the Council of Arles in A. D. 314 and was represented at the Council of Nice in A. D. 325; it is the same in origin as the church founded by St. Paul in Britain as testified by the early bishops and fathers and ecclesiastical historians of the Catholic and Apostolic Church—St. Clement, St. Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, St. Chrysostom and others.—Church Facts, a pamphlet published by Young Churchman Company.

These are not church facts nor even church fancies. They hardly deserve the dignity of the name of church fallacies. There is no courteous term which can justly characterize such flagrant misuse of Scripture and of history.

There is no intimation whatever in the Scripture that Jesus during the forty days after the resurrection taught his disciples a system of church government. The Kingdom of God of which Jesus talked was not identical with the organized church, and to suppose that He occupied the few brief meetings with the disciples after his resurrection in delivering lectures on church polity is preposterous. Desperate must be the case of a sectarian author who is forced to such shifts. The character of the conversations of this period recorded in the Gospels is so remote from this as to make the supposition very nearly violent; but if He did reveal to them a system of church government, the significant fact concerning it is that they went straight forward, as we shall later see, and organized self-governing churches.

An Eminent Episcopalian Scholar's Testimony. The apostolic origin of the British Church, whether through St. Paul or one of the Twelve, is unproved and improbable. When Eusebius, following Origen, sketches the fields of apostolic missionary work, he omits Britain. The attractive story of Joseph of Arimathea founding Glastonbury is a medieval legend of even later date than that of St. James at Compostella in Spain. We have something a little more substantial when Tertullian, among the nations in which the faith has found a home, mentions Hispaniarum omnes termini, et Galliarum deversce nationes, et Britanorum inaccessa Romanis loca Christo vero subdita. But an oratorical flourish of this kind need not mean more than that Tertullian knew that the Gospel had spread widely, and liked to give telling details. Irenæus, writing a little earlier than Tertullian, mentions Germany, Iberia, and the Celts, but says nothing about Britain; and it is quite possible that in his time Christianity had not yet reached our shores.

It seems right to add a word of caution against the common confusion between the British Church and the English Church. They were quite distinct, and had very little to do with one another. To cite the British bishops at the Councils of Arles and Rimini as evidence of the antiquity of the English Church is preposterous. There was then no England; and the ancestors of English Churchmen were heathen tribes on the continent. The history of the Church of England begins with the episcopate of Archbishop Theodore (A. D. 668), or at the very earliest with the landing of Augustine (A. D. 597). By that time the British Church had been almost destroyed by the heathen English, and the remnant of it refused to assist Augustine in the work of conversion. The Scottish Church of Ireland and West Scotland rendered some help; the British Church stood aloof. Bede tells us that down to his day the Britains still treated English Christians as pagans.—*Alfred Plummer:* The Church of the Early Fathers.

When Do We First Find a Distinction Between Bishop and Presbyter? The first distinction we find between bishop and presbyter is in the writings of Ignatius, who died in 107 A. D. In these letters for the first time the local church has not only a single bishop but a company of elders. These letters represented a custom which had come to prevail and quite recently in the churches of Asia Minor. We know that for a long time afterward a different custom prevailed in other regions, but the letters of Ignatius are the stronghold of those who attempt to trace a distinction between bishop and presbyter back to the time of the apostles. As Peter and Paul had both suffered martyrdom forty years before the death of Ignatius, his testimony leaves a wide gap.

Distinction in Terms Bishop and Presbyter. Presbyter may denote simply the old as opposed to the young; it may be a title of honor (by which personal excellence as well as the quality of representing an older authoritative period [=a witness of tradition] is marked); it can also denote the elected and formally appointed member of a council. The use of the word in its different meanings within the Christian communities may be derived from the synagogue—this is the most natural assumption—or from the municipal constitutions, or it may have arisen spontaneously. In the same way the bishops may be derived from the Septuagint; they may have been copied from the municipal administrations, but they may also—and this is the most probable view—have arisen spontaneously. The word always signifies an overseer, curator, superintendent; but as to what the supervision is concerned with, it contains no indication. It may be souls, and then the word is equivalent to pastors (see I Pet. 2:25, "the shepherd and overseer of your souls" . . .), but it may also be buildings, economic affairs, etc., or it may be a combination of the two.—*Harnack:* Constitution and Law, p. 58.

The Plural Episcopate. It is true that this very office [the ministry] as embodied in a single person, has no strict claim to be an apostolic institution, seeing that all local ministry was in the apostolic age, exercised by a plurality of persons, whether elders or deacons.—*J. Vernon Bartlet* in address, Is the Congregational Ministry Apostolic? Int. Council Edinburgh, 1908 Report, p. 213.

Origin of Episcopate. The monarchical episcopate is first met with in Asia Minor, where the development seems to have arisen more rapidly than anywhere else; there are intimations of this in the letters of Ignatius, written when he was traveling from Antioch (circa 110) to Rome, where he was to suffer the death of a martyr. Ignatius welcomed it with great enthusiasm. A new form of enthusiasm, in fact, is about to arise—enthusiasm for an office. In earlier days apostles and prophets were expected to produce a direct testimony, full of spiritual power, the word of God; they were expected to show themselves to be representatives of Christ. Ignatius claims that the bishop answers these requirements: Whoever opposes him opposes God; he represents the unity of the Church, and is surety for it; where the bishop is, there are the flock, just as where Christ is there is the Universal Church. In this connection we hear for the first time of the "Catholic Church" (ad Smyrn 8). Evidently it was particularly the danger of division into many parties within the Church, of schism, that called forth this enthusiastic praise of what was manifestly a new born constitution.—*Hans von Schubert:* Outlines of Church History, pp. 56-57.

Ignatius, it is true, urges obedience to bishops, but what he has in mind seems to be a loyalty to the local mniister in the face of divisive individualism. Irenæus, indeed, attaches much importance to bishops, but chiefly as persons to whom inquirers or doubters may be referred for information as to the faith. We proceed down the line of saints and confessors till we come in the middle of the third century to Cyprian. He was the father of

ecclesiastics as Origen was the father of theologians.—*Dean George Hodges:* The Early Church, p. 95.

Were the Bishops Successors of the Apostles? The theory that bishops were successors of the apostles is first set forth by Ignatius, to whom we are indebted for the idea of a monarchical bishop, but Ignatius knows no such official as a diocesan bishop. His bishop is a local pastor, the foremost representative of a single local church. While the epistles of Ignatius are the stronghold of those who appeal to early usage in support of the monarchical episcopate, the officer whom he describes has nothing in common with the modern notion of an episcopal bishop but is to all intents and purposes a Congregational pastor, with an advisory board of elders.

Bishop the Head of Local Church. The letters of Ignatius are surprising, because suddenly and with extraordinary vehemence they show us the local church unified in a single minister, called now a bishop, and distinguished from the elders. As Ignatius was martyred in A. D. 107, the letters, if genuine, show us the church in Antioch, and the churches in Asia Minor, as they were after the death of the Apostle John. Possibly the fact in the New Testament which best prepares us for this advance in church government is the series of letters to the seven churches in the Apocalypse. The "angel of the church" is evidently the representative of the church. And what the angel of the church is there, the bishop is in Ignatius. The interest of this connection is deepened by the fact that Ignatius writes to two of the seven churches, Smyrna and Philadelphia. At Ephesus the bishop is Onesimus; at Magnesia, Damas; at Tralles, Polybius; at Smyrna, Polycarp. The bishop, or angel, of Philadelphia is not named. Curiously enough the letter to Rome does not refer to the bishop of that church, and indeed no mention of any kind is made of the ministry there.—*Horton:* The Early Church, p. 88.

Differentialism of Duties. In the very earliest period presbyters and bishops here and there coincided, so that every duly appointed presbyter was also called a bishop. But quick and decisive was the victory of the form of expression according to which only the officials who played an active and leading part in the assembly of the community and in the care of the poor were called bishops (without losing the name presbyter or their place in the college of presbyters). Bishop is a higher name and probably has nothing to do originally with the secular *episcopos* of a city, but only with the *episcopos* Christ (I Pet. 2:25; Ign. Eph. 6:1; Magn. 6:1, 13:2; Trall, 3:1; Rom. 9:1). At a later period analogies may have been set up, and here and there these may have been of importance, but this cannot be proved. This victory is obviously a proof of the increasing importance of the care of the poor and

of the service in the assembly of the community, which more and more resolved itself into the conducting of public worship, now beginning to establish itself in a fixed form. But the function of the bishops and deacons (especially, however, of the former) must have completely differentiated itself from that of the presbyters in general, when, owing to the lack of prophets and teachers, they were charged with the function of building up by means of the Word and other duties which these inspired men had hitherto performed.—*Harnack:* Constitution and Law of Early Church, p. 92.

Did the Apostles Invent Apostolic Succession? No, they did nothing of the kind. Sabatier has shrewdly said that the doctrine of apostolic succession did not make the bishops, but the bishops made the doctrine. The beginnings of this theory may be traced straight to Irenæus, who in support of his quite new idea of a single bishop in the local church, conceived of this idea as inherent in the organization of the church by the apostles. The churches in Asia Minor knew little, and had seen little, of the conference of an apostolic group. Such a group continued for some time in Jerusalem, not composed, as we know, wholly of those who had been disciples of Jesus, but of some of those men and of others prominent in Palestinian Christianity, notably James, the brother of Jesus. There was only one attempt to keep the apostolic number complete. The term apostle came to be very loosely applied, and in the second century meant, not one of the original twelve, but a traveling evangelist, who was to be given free entertainment for a limited time only, and received courteously, but with reservations. That the twelve apostles ordained successors in the apostolic office, these being bishops as distinct from presbyters, is a pure fiction, the dream of ecclesiastics who have no other foundation for their alleged apostolic authority.

The apostolic succession of the New Testament is a spiritual succession from the apostles: it is not a succession of apostles under the title of bishops.

The claim of the Church of Rome that its bishops can prove direct descent of ordination from Peter is not sustained by the evidence; and the attempt of the high church

element in the Episcopal Church to derive a succession for their orders, either from Rome, or by way of the alleged ancient Church of Britain, is still less satisfactory. It is repudiated by Rome, and by candid scholars in the Episcopal Church.

The oldest of the lists of Roman bishops which has come down to us in connection with the claim of apostolic succession is that of Eusebius, in the fourth century, quoting Hegesippus, about 160 A. D., who traveled to Corinth and Rome, and made up such a list of bishops as he was able at that time to do. Unfortunately for the theory of the succession, there are two other lists almost as old and entitled to as much respect, both of which differ from that of Hegesippus, even as to the first four names. Irenæus, who died in the same year as Hegesippus, 189, gives a list of Roman bishops beginning with Peter and Paul, Linus, Anacletus, Clement; but Tertullian makes Clement the immediate successor of Peter, and this would appear far more likely, inasmuch as he was a companion of the Apostles, and his first epistle was once counted for holy Scripture, and Paul says of him that his name is in the Book of Life (Phil. 4:3). But Rufinus starts the list with Linus and Cletus, both of whom, according to his calendar, died before Peter. Dr. Richard F. Littledale, in his work on the "Petrine Claims," enumerates eleven divergent views and conflicting lists covering the first period of the Roman Church. It is absurd to suppose that so high and top-heavy an edifice as the theory of apostolic succession can be built on such a foundation of sand.

Theory of Apostolical Succession. An attribute of quite special importance is proclaimed quite clearly in the West as early as the end of the second century, i. e., the attribute of the apostolical succession of the bishops. In that epoch of civilization ideas of succession were by no means unusual; they generally took the form of mystical conceptions and legal fictions. These, however, are based on a very true analysis of experience, since there is hardly anything which gives a greater feeling of confidence and stability (if one does not go beyond a superficial view) than the chain of regular successions in an office or calling, or in connection with the transmission of a doctrine regarded as a deposit.

Precedents and limitations necessarily grow up in connection with any office, as well as ideas of what is inevitably involved in it, and these influence not only the outside public but also the holders of the office or the custodians of the deposit, and confer upon these men, as a kind of permanent stamp, a characteristic temperament and reputation, as though the originator of the whole chain were in some sort incarnate in them all.

It followed as a necessary consequence of the conception of the apostolicity of the bishops that the ancient, and partly correct, tradition that the apostles had appointed the officials of the Church now became specialized, and it was asserted that the apostles (or in such cases always a single apostle) had appointed the bishops in the individual communities. . . . The apostolical character of the episcopate, which was the crown and culmination of its dignity, raised it high above the presbyters, and so immediately restored to it the pre-eminence and reputation which it seemed likely to lose through being placed on the same level as the presbyters in their capacity of priests. . . . As individuals the presbyters were probably not very important where the community was small and there was only one assembly for worship in a place, but no doubt they gained in importance where there were several such assemblies, for then they were commissioned by the bishop to conduct the services of the branch congregations, and he needed their advice and help in the numerous and important matters which came before him.—*Harnack:* Constitution and Law of the Church, pp. 122-129.

Who Were the Apostles in the Second Century? The literature of the second century indicates plainly what conception the churches of that period had of the apostolic office in their day. The successors of the apostles were not high and mighty ecclesiastics, but itinerant evangelists. That exceedingly valuable document, known as "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," which is really the oldest church manual in existence, gives specific direction. The apostle is to receive free entertainment for not more than two days, and is not to carry away with him as a contribution any money, nor more than enough bread to last him till he comes to his next lodging. Any idea that he was to sit in his metropolitan cathedral, receiving tribute from lesser clergy, is absurd in the light of this reliable information.

From the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Now with regard to the apostles and prophets, according to the decree of the gospel, so do ye.

Let every apostle that cometh to you be received as the Lord. But he shall not remain longer than one day; and if need be

another day also; but if he remain three days he is a false prophet.
And when the apostle departeth, let him take nothing except bread till he reach his lodging. But if he ask for money he is a false prophet.—*Didache:* xi, 3-6.

Note by Philip Schaff. The apostle here referred to is a wandering evangelist or itinerant preacher who carries the gospel to the unconverted, and is therefore not allowed to remain in one place. Hermas uses the term likewise in this wider sense and speaks of forty apostles and teachers. Eusebius says, "It is impossible for us to give the number of the individuals that became pastors or evangelists during the first immediate succession from the apostles in the churches throughout the world."—Commentary on Didache, pp. 69, 199.

Was the Monarchical Episcopate Episcopal? When the idea of the bishop as elevated above the presbyter obtained entrance into certain churches, particularly in Asia Minor, it was in no such form as is now represented in the idea of the bishop of a diocese supervising and controlling the presbyters of a large group of churches. The bishop was the presiding presbyter in a local church, and the presbyters were ministers of the same church. Each church was supposed to possess its plural ministry of presbyters, of whom one, the bishop, represented the church in its wider relationships. The theory of Irenæus was not that the churches of a district were united in support of a single bishop, but that each local church was united in its bishop to other churches similarly represented, each by its own bishop. Irenæus, wide as was his departure from the primitive polity, was still not far from a modern Congregationalist, recognizing that however many presbyters a church may possess, inevitably one minister will come to recognition as in a special sense its pastor.

The Monarchical Episcopate. As regards the question of the origin of the monarchical office, it is extremely significant that it developed in connection with the problem of organization. Organization came within the sphere of the officials in charge of public worship, who also had in their hands the administration of the funds and the care of the poor. These officials in charge of the worship are already mentioned by Paul (Philippians); Clement not only carries back their appointment to the apostles, but also knows of an apostolical injunction dealing with the lasting necessity of such an office of overseer (bishop), while Hermas connects them with the apostles and teachers, and the Didache with the

prophets and teachers (similar assertions are not made about the office of the presbyters). Since we are deprived of almost every direct source of information concerning the origin of the monarchy of the bishop, we are thrown back upon hypotheses. In connection with these we must be mindful of the saying of Salmon: If the original constitution of the Church was not the same as in the time of Irenæus, it must at least have been capable of an inner development to the later form, and indeed in the form of quite gradual changes, called forth by causes universal in their nature.—*Harnack:* Constitution and Law, p. 96.

View of Ignatius. Ignatius is quite sure that the apostles themselves instituted this episcopal office. In view of the silence of the New Testament this confidence is very striking. We are inclined to infer that the "monarchical" episcopate of James at Jerusalem, and the "angels of the churches" in Asia Minor, represent the practice of the twelve apostles, with which Ignatius was familiar, and that the Pauline method of elders and deacons without a president was peculiar to his churches, and perhaps only transitional, attaching to the period when he was in active control of all his churches. At any rate, the eager and confident attitude of Ignatius, on the subject of a single minister presiding over the local church, shows that the practice which has prevailed all through Christendom is carried back, if not to the time of the apostles, at any rate to that which immediately succeeded. There is an august simile; the local church is compared to the heavenly court: "The bishop presiding after the likeness of God, and the presbyters after the likeness of the council of the apostles, with the deacons also who are most dear to me, having been entrusted with the diaconate of Jesus Christ" (Magn. 6).

The Ignatian bishop exactly corresponds to the pastor of a Congregational church in England or in America. And that is the direction in which we may most hopefully seek to illustrate the state of the church in the time of Ignatius. In each place there is one church. He would not, like modern Congregationalists, allow several churches in a single city. He, like St. Paul, and the New Testament generally, speaks of "the church which is in Ephesus" or "in Magnesia," but he would never have said "the churches of Ephesus." Each city had its one organized community, with the bishop at the head of it, and its due complement of elders and deacons. Ignatius is the earliest writer to use the phrase which acquired so amazing a power, "the Catholic Church"; but he means by it not what it afterwards came to mean, but the sum total of the local communities held together by mutual intercourse and acts of sympathy. The bishop does not preside over several churches, but only over one; we do not even hear yet of synods of bishops from neighboring towns. The church is itself the sovereign authority, which appoints its own representatives. The authority, however, of bishop and presbyters, when once appointed, was indefeasible. Obedience to them must be rendered "as to the apostles of Jesus Christ our hope" (Trall. 2), so that in the view of Ignatius the presbytery was virtually the successor of the apostles, the presbytery, that is, of the local church.—*Horton:* Early Church, pp. 89-90.

Bishop as an Elder Brother. We may best sum up his position

by saying that he is to be the elder brother in the brotherhood of the church.—*Durrell:* The Historic Church, p. 55.

The Ignatian doctrine did not go unchallenged. Many of the early churches throughout whole districts and nations conducted their own ordinations. For a considerable period Alexandria was the most important center in Christendom; its representatives at the Council of Nicaea were, as Dean Stanly has said, the most learned body in the entire Council. The bishop of Alexandria, tracing his succession from Mark, was for a time the only potentate who bore the name of Pope; and after the Council of Nicaea he was "the judge of the world." But the church of Alexandria had no episcopal ordination. The bishop, with all his extraordinary power, was a presiding presbyter.

The Testimony of Jerome. For at Alexanderia, also, from Mark the Evangelist to the Bishops Heracles and Dionysius, the presbyters always called one elected by themselves, and placed in a higher rank their bishop.—Epistle to Evangelius.

Jerome's Further Testimony. A bishop is the same as a presbyter; and before, by the instigation of the devil, there were divisions in religion, the Church was governed by the council of the presbyters.

How Did the Modern Denominations Arise? The various denominations which now comprise the visible church have risen partly through historic development and geographical distribution and partly through the various attempts that have been made to reform the Church or some of its branches, or to emphasize some distinctive principle or doctrine.

Some of the denominations that now exist, as for instance the Roman Catholic, believe themselves to be able to establish unbroken historical lines of descent from apostolic days. It does not follow, however, that these churches are more apostolic in type or character than those that trace their modern beginnings to definite modern movements. The older Protestant denominations, such as the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Reformed, the Congregational, and the Lutheran, grew out of the movements that followed the

Reformation, but may be none the less apostolic by reason of that fact. When Roman Catholic theologians taunted the early bishops of the Church of England with the statement that they could not prove their succession from the apostles, these bishops were wont to reply that apostolic grace and authority had never been confined to mere tactual succession, and reminded their opponents that in Jesus' day the scribes and pharisees sat in Moses' seat.

Episcopal Succession Not a Proof of Divine Authority. I deny, my Lord, that succession of bishops is an infallible point to know the Church by. . . . Although you can prove the succession of bishops from Peter, yet this is not sufficient to prove Rome the Catholic Church, unless you can prove the profession of Peter's faith, whereupon the Catholic Church is builded, to have continued in his successors at Rome, and at this present time.—*Archbishop Philpot* (martyr of 1555): Examinations, pp. 37, 137.

Such as teach the people to know the church by these signs, namely, by the traditions of men and the succession of bishops, teach wrong.—*Bishop Hooper:* Declaration of Christ and His Office, 1547 A. D.

The Church is bound to no sort of people, or any ordinary succession of bishops, cardinals or such like, but unto the very Word of God.—*Bishop Hooper:* Confession of Faith, A. D. 1550.

Is the Papal Form of Government Scriptural? The Roman Catholic Church claims that there is one holy and infallible church with an unchanged form of government, deriving its authority from Christ through Peter and his successors. No such claim can be sustained by Holy Scripture.

The Roman Claim. Her creed is now identical with what it was in past ages. The same Gospel of peace that Jesus Christ preached on the Mount; the same doctrine that St. Peter preached at Antioch and Rome; St. Paul at Ephesus; St. John Chrysostom at Constantinople; St. Augustine in Hippo; St. Ambrose in Milan; St. Remigius in France; St. Boniface in Germany; St. Athanasius in Alexandria; the same doctrine that St. Patrick introduced into Ireland; that St. Augustine brought into England, and St. Pelagius into Scotland, is ever preached in the Catholic Church throughout the globe, from January till December—"Jesus Christ yesterday, and to-day, and the same forever."

The same admirable unity that exists in matters of faith is also established in the government of the Church. All the members of the vast body of Catholic Christians are as intimately united to one visible chief as the members of the human body are joined to the head. The faithful of each parish are subject to their immediate pastor. Each pastor is subordinate to his bishop,

and each bishop of Christendom acknowledges the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter, and head of the Catholic Church.

Jesus, our Lord, founded but one Church, which He was pleased to build on Peter. Therefore, any church that does not recognize Peter as its foundation stone is not the Church of Christ, and therefore cannot stand, for it is not the work of God.—*Cardinal Gibbons:* The Faith of Our Fathers, pp. 28-29.

The Protestant answers that this whole chain of reasoning is artificial, opposed to the free spirit of the Kingdom of God as Jesus established it, opposed to a reasonable interpretation of Holy Scripture, and quite subversive of the best life of the Church both in polity and in doctrine. The New Testament is utterly lacking in any indication that Peter supposed himself to possess larger authority than did the other apostles. In their councils he was one among the others, more ready of speech and therefore sometimes speaking more wisely and at other times less wisely than his associates; a man of more resourcefulness and initiative than most of his companions, but in no way elevated above them in the dignity of his office. Whether primacy existed in Jerusalem appears not to have been manifested in Peter but in James, the brother of the Lord, who was not even one of the original twelve. Far from being exalted above his brethren, Peter was sometimes manifestly in the wrong and was reproved by them (Gal. 2:11-14). In his letters to other Christian ministers he claimed no sacerdotal authority, but wrote as an elder to other elders, saying: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder" (I Peter 5:1). So far from his assuming a primacy as Bishop of Rome and transmitting that authority to his successors in that see—

(a) We have no evidence that Peter assumed such authority.

(b) We have no reason to believe that if he had assumed it, his authority would have been conceded by the others.

(c) We do not know that Peter ever was in Rome.

(d) If Peter was in Rome, we lack any evidence either

that he was recognized as bishop there or that he ordained any other bishop as his successor.

(e) If Peter was bishop of Rome and ordained a successor, we do not know who that successor was. The oldest lists which we have of the bishops of Rome all differ in the order of the first bishops after Peter.

Catholicism Not Catholic. But Catholicism is not even Catholic. There are several "Catholicisms"; the eastern and western denounce each other: each is equally sure that it is the one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Thus neither is Catholic in the proper sense of the word, "universal" and "all inclusive." Catholicism completely repudiates that Catholic idea which was quite natural to Paul when he wrote "unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours" (I Cor. 1:2). The millions who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in Protestant countries, and accept the New Testament as the teaching of Christ and the apostles, Catholicism excludes and anathematises.—*R. F. Horton:* The Early Church, p. 158.

Was Peter the Rock of the Church? There has been much discussion as to whether the rock to which Jesus referred was Peter himself or Peter's confession. Roman Catholics steadfastly declare that Peter was the rock. Protestants generally have affirmed that the rock was Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ. Peter certainly was not the rock in the sense of being an official with papal authority, entitled by virtue of his office to lord it over his brethren. Such authority he never assumed and the apostles never acknowledged. Paul explicitly denied that Peter had any more authority than himself and placed upon record the fact that he withstood Peter to the face on one occasion, and on another occasion Paul declared that Peter and his companions learned more from Paul than Paul did from Peter. Yet, there is a sense in which Peter may be considered to have been the rock. He was the first of the apostles to confess his faith in Jesus as the Christ, and thus was the representative of all who were to confess that faith which constitutes the Church. The rock is thus not an impersonal doctrine, but is composed of living souls

united in a common faith. Against this rock the gates of Hades hath not prevailed (Matt. 16: 18).

Did Jesus Give to Peter the Power of Binding and Loosing? Jesus said to Peter, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" (Matt. 16: 19). But these same words which at that moment applied in a special sense to Peter as the only one at that particular time confessing Christ, He shortly afterward repeated with particular reference to the whole ecclesia. Not only is the plural number here significant, but the connection is important. "If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" (Matt. 18: 17, 18). No power was conferred upon Peter in the earlier instance which was not later explicitly delegated to the whole congregation.

Is the Episcopal System Scriptural? The theory of the Episcopal Church is not that authority is vested in a single bishop, whether the Bishop of Rome or any other, but that it resides in the order of bishops elevated above presbyters or pastors, to whom has descended the right of government through divine grace bestowed upon the original twelve apostles and communicated by them to their successors, the bishops, by whom that grace unchanged and undiminished has been preserved in unbroken succession by the laying on of hands of bishops from the twelve apostles down.

To this claim the Congregational and many other churches reply: There is no evidence in the New Testament that the twelve apostles constituted an episcopate, or that after the first few years in Jerusalem when it was felt to be necessary to preserve the apostolic group composed of men who had known Jesus in the flesh, any effort was made to keep up the organization of the original twelve by succession or otherwise. The apostles soon became more than twelve in number, and if this was done by ordination of the original twelve we do not know it. There is no indi-

cation whatever that Paul or Barnabas were ordained apostles by the original apostles. Paul's own account of his apostleship is quite distinctly opposed to any such idea. Nor were the bishops in the early Church in any narrow sense successors of the apostles. They succeeded to that office only as pastors or elders. This is what the apostles called themselves. Their oversight appears to have been one of guidance, as of those who had been closely associated with Jesus and whose experience and recognized high character made it suitable for them to give directions. These directions, as is evident from the fifteenth chapter of Acts, were advisory and quite destitute of any assumption of sacerdotal authority.

The Episcopal Church in America is suffering, first from a belated recrudescence of the Oxford movement, and secondly from a foreign invasion. The coming to America in recent years of a considerable number of English rectors, laboring under the delusions inherited from their experience in a state church, has resulted in the demand for a new name for the Episcopal Church, so chosen as to be in the highest degree offensive to other churches, and thoroughly false and unchristian in its implications.

The Primitive Church. The New Testament provides no clear teaching on the subject of the constitution of the Christian ministry. The nearer we approach to the source of the Christian ministry, the more impossible it is to perceive its precise constitution; the further we travel from that source the more definite becomes its theory, the more extensive its claims, the more rigid its form. Our historical scholars have recovered for us the knowledge of ecclesiastical conditions in the first two centuries, and we perceive that the church then, when apostolic tradition was recent and powerful, was variously organized. In Asia Minor there were bishops; in Rome and Alexandria there were none. Along with both bishops and presbyters were still to be found through most part of that period the representatives of the oldest ministry of all, that of prophets and apostles, called to their work by direct and manifest action of the Holy Spirit. This better knowledge of the primitive Church is a very recent thing, and has not yet extended itself over the greater part of our communion.—*Canon Henson:* Westminster Sermons, 1908.

A Sectarian Catechism. What, then, is our title? We are Catholics.

Are we Protestants? No.

Are you an Episcopalian? No; I am not an Episcopalian; I am a Catholic.

But is not the title of our church in this country the Protestant Episcopal Church? Yes, but this is only its legal title.

What might we well call our branch of the Catholic Church? The American Church, or the Church in America.

As a matter of fact, how is it usually called by those who belong to it? It is called the American Church.

Has God any plan of salvation? God has a plan of salvation.

Where is it? It is in His Church.

Is it of importance that we belong to the Church rather than to some sect? Yes.

Where does the road to heaven lie? The way to heaven lies through the Church.

Is membership in the Church the same as being saved? No; the Church is the state of salvation.

Is there any salvation out of the Church? There is no salvation that we know of out of the Church.

Is there any good reason for believing that there may be an invisible Church, composed of those only who are good? There is not the slightest reason for believing any such thing.

How do the sects differ from the Catholic Church? While it was founded by God, they were all founded by men.—*W. H. Vibert:* A Plain Catechism of Church Teaching.

Then follow questions and answers dating the rise of the Lutherans from Martin Luther in 1520; the Presbyterians from John Calvin, about 1541; the Baptists from Menno, about 1551; the Congregationalists from Robert Browne, in 1585; the Quakers from George Fox, in 1646; and the Methodists from John Wesley, in 1752. In contradistinction to these, the Episcopal Church, which is called the Catholic Church—the name Episcopal and that of Protestant being carefully disclaimed—was founded by "Jesus Christ, our Lord God, nearly 2,000 years ago." All other founders it declares to be dead; and it asks:

Would you rather belong to a society whose founder always lives to help you, or to one whose founder is dead and buried? I would much rather belong to a society whose Almighty Head always lives.

There is more of this in the catechism referred to, and it is only one of several in which the same sort of thing is found. Sectarian bigotry could not go much farther. No right minded Episcopalian could count it unreasonable

that a Congregationalist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker or Baptist should protest against such misrepresentation. It is not to be wondered at that Episcopalians who believe such doctrine should seek to induce young people in other sects in which is no promise of salvation, and which are all modern organizations whose founders are dead, to leave those wicked organizations, which are specifically declared to be guilty of sin, and to come for salvation into that "state of salvation" which is "the Church." The Episcopal Church has no exclusive right to the title "the Church," and the true Church is very much larger than these sectarian definitions.

The following may further illustrate the letter and spirit of this offensive and misleading literature:

History Made to Order. The following denominations arose in the sixteenth century: Lutheranism in Germany; Presbyterianism in Switzerland; and Independency, now called in the United States Congregationalism, in England. The Baptists appeared in England about 1611; and Methodism became a sect in the eighteenth century. Smaller denominations arose in various ways and times. To be a part of the Catholic Church it is necessary to have Catholic orders. These orders are threefold: Bishop, priest, and deacon, and must be had by ordination, or consecration, through bishops who themselves have their orders without any break from the first apostles. This is what is called apostolic succession. The Anglican Church, of which we are a branch, can prove historically that it has this succession unbroken.—Elementary Notes on the Church, Tract Published by Young Churchman Company, pp. 13, 15.

While the foremost scholars within the Episcopal Church have been remarkably frank in acknowledging the independence of the local churches in New Testament times, and the identity of bishops and presbyters, the demands for a controversial literature which can make unfounded claims for that denomination has resulted in the publication, by denominational houses that ought to have refused it, of a literature possible to be produced by honest men only if they were ignorant of the subject and not otherwise. Considering what the ablest Episcopalian scholars have freely admitted, and still admit, such ignorance is

indeed colossal, but is the only real qualification which some of these authors have for their task.

Where Ignorance Is an Essential Qualification. What ancient ecclesiastical precedent is there in favor of the Independent or Congregational scheme? I am not aware that a single precedent is or ever has been so alleged.—*Thomas Farrar:* The Christian Ministry, Third London Edition, p. 7.

Is There Truth in the Doctrine of Apostolic Succession? There is. There always has been somewhere living witness to the truth in Christ. If no one line can be traced with absolute accuracy, as it cannot, still it is an inspiring thought that in no age since Jesus was among men has the light of His gospel wholly died out. There has always been a Church since He established it, and that Church still lives, and we belong to it. But this succession is no monopoly of any one branch of the Church. Whatever truth there is in the doctrine belongs to Congregationalists as truly as to any other body of Christians. If the doctrine were to be used as an occasion of spiritual pride and arrogance, then it is quite as well that it is uncertain. Such a doctrine, if it is to be held at all, should never be used by one church or sect as ground to think of itself more highly than it ought to think. So far as the doctrine is true, its truth is the common heritage of Christians.

Is the Presbyterian Form of Government Scriptural? It is evident from the epistles of the New Testament that the elders were entrusted with the general oversight and direction in their local churches, and that the councils of elders advised in matters pertaining to the common good. It is not apparent, however, that this rule of the elders was subversive of the ultimate authority of the church membership. The great bodies of Christians in the United States, who are governed by their elders, have grown increasingly democratic with the progress of the years. It has become practically true in many cases that a Methodist or Presbyterian church calls its own pastor and manages its own affairs with little interference by conference or presbytery. Both these great bodies are essentially Presbyterian, the

authority arising in the Methodist church through local, state and general conference composed of clerical and lay delegates, and the Presbyterian government ascending through presbytery and synod to the General Assembly and being composed of teaching and ruling elders. For such an organization, with complicated machinery and courts of appeal, there is no certain warrant in the Scripture.

It need hardly be noted in passing that the Methodist Church, while Episcopal in name and while having a group of bishops, does not consider itself Episcopal in its government. Its bishops constitute not an order but an office. The real government is by the elders, and that church is to be classed as Presbyterian in its form.

The forms of supervision and fellowship in this and other Presbyterian churches have been fruitful of great good in many cases, but they also have laid burdens of unscriptural authority upon ministers and churches. The Methodist church is admirable in its spirit of enterprise; it is most praiseworthy in its genius for organization, enabling it almost to realize its ideal of providing a church for every pastor and a pastor for every church; still it exercises in some cases a practically tyrannical authority over its ministry. The Presbyterian church has a noble history; and it has a fine type of Christian character in its ministry and membership; still it has a system of creed tests and a fatally convenient machinery for heresy trials which have not served to keep it purer than other denominations, and often have led to burdensome and unhappy results.

In the main the Presbyterian Church has stood with the Congregational churches for the distinctive principles of Puritanism and progress. But instances have not been lacking in this country, as in the discussions between the old and new schools, in which it has been apparent that a government by presbyters could be as dangerous to liberty as a government by bishops. Even so in the beginning of the English Reformation it was discovered that "new pres-

byter is but old priest writ large." It would be ungracious to speak much of the intolerance of early days when all men were intolerant to a greater or less degree, but that branch of Puritanism which developed into Presbyterianism was on the whole less favorable to progress than that which developed into Congregationalism. Robert Browne was able to write with good nature and a quiet humor of his experiences and to recall that the spirit of ecclesiastical tyranny was able to express itself as effective through presbyters as through popes with this disadvantage that the presbyters are more numerous.

Robert Browne on Official Tyranny. This therefore is my Iudgement, good Vncle, that though the names of pastors, doctors & presbyters be lawful, being found in the scriptures, yet that a pope or proud popelinge may ly hyd vnder the names. Yea, and further I Iudge, that if the Parliament should establish such names, & those the officers according to those names, which seek their owne discipline, that then in stead of one Pope we should haue a thousand, & of some Lord Byshops in name a thousand Lordly Tyrants in deed, which do now disdain the name. This haue I found by experience to be trewe, both in forreine contries and mine owne Contrie. I can testify by trial of Scotland, where the preachers hauing no names of bishops did imprison me more wrongfully than anie Bishop would haue done, so theis hauing nether the name nor the power yet haue vsurped more than the Byshops which haue power. For before my first vyoag beyond sea, & sence my last retourne, I haue been in more than twentie prisons. And for once imprisoned by the byshops I haue been more than thrise imprisoned by the preachers or their procuringe. A New Years Guift, pp. 25-27.

What Do Congregationalists Teach Concerning the Apostolic Church? In the light of the foregoing facts, and of many more that might be added, Congregationalists hold that the churches of the New Testament were independent, self-governing local congregations, united in their love of Christ, and expressing their fellowship through occasional representative gatherings which gave valued advice but were destitute of ecclesiastical control. The autonomy of the local church and the fellowship of all the churches are two fundamental principles of Congregationalism, and appear to have been fundamental also in the early Church.

How Far a Pattern? The early fathers of modern Congrega-

tionalism held that "the facts of Church government are all of them exactly described in the Word of God . . . and therefore to continue one and the same unto the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . So that it is not left in the power of men, officers, churches, or any state in the world to add, to diminish, or alter anything in the least measure therein."—Cambridge Platform, 1648.

Of current Congregationalism, Dr. Boynton declared: We are disposed to claim in these days only that the principles for the organization of Christian churches are given us in the few commands of the Master and the apostles, and in the wider illustrations to be seen in their example.—Congregational Way, p. 16.

Prof. Williston Walker says: Congregationalism has given a normal value even to the most incidental variations as to Church usages of the New Testament, more fully than any other system of ecclesiastical polity.—Hist. Cong. Churches.

Commenting on the foregoing, Dr. Boynton says: But we do not claim that Jesus or his first disciples set out to organize a form of government, or that, if they had done so, it would have been the unvarying duty of their successors exactly to follow the pattern at all times and under all circumstances. We have no objection to a number of churches organizing under a bishop of their own appointment, to whom a large amount of responsibility for their general conduct shall be given. Indeed, we can see under many conditions how this may be proper and wise. Nor do we know of any reason why it is not allowable for individual churches to put authority, which they might not think it best to exercise alone, into the hands of the whole or of a group. We only claim that, as we study the New Testament churches, we find more which bears resemblance to fellowship based upon independence than to anything which might be called church government.—Congregational Way, p. 17.

Gradual Development as Need Arose. In this way churches sprang up. No careful outline of their organization was revealed by Christ or conceived by his apostles. They came into being as Christians found themselves drawn to one another by common love and service to one Lord, and as they were led by the Holy Spirit to feel that in such fellowship they could best express their inward union and best fulfill the purpose for which they represented their Lord in the world. The result of this process of organization was Congregationalism.—*Dunning:* Congregationalists, p. 50.

Is Congregationalism Biblical? Congregationalists do not claim that the government of the early Church was so rigid in its prescribed forms that no development of organic life should be undertaken without specific authority of Scripture; and they have been the most earnest promoters of Sunday schools, Christian Endeavor societies and missionary and educational organizations. But they do claim

that the organization of the Church should develop along lines that leave unimpaired the essential principles of the New Testament organization; and this they steadfastly endeavor to do. Thus there are few church organizations, if any, more stable in their fundamental principles, or more flexible in their adaptations. Congregationalists are confident, first, that their government is built on the one and abiding Foundation, the authority of Christ and the practice of the apostles; and, secondly, that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty of adaptation without sacrifice of essential principle.

When it is affirmed that the Congregational system of church government is scriptural, it is not intended to declare that no modification whatever has been made of New Testament forms, or even that those forms of government are so rigidly defined that any one denomination can claim a monopoly of the right to call itself a true Christian church, but three things may truthfully be claimed on behalf of the scriptural authority of the Congregational churches:

(1) It is clearly taught in the New Testament that each local church was independent of all ecclesiastical control and free in the management of its own affairs.

(2) The New Testament teaches that the bishops of the New Testament were not elevated in rank above the presbyters, but that every presbyter was a bishop and every bishop a presbyter.

(3) That, while the New Testament churches had fellowship one with another and exercised that fellowship through instruction by the apostles and their associates and by other good men, and by councils convened for advice in matters of general concern, neither apostle nor council claimed the right to exercise arbitrary control over any local church or its pastor.

In these three particulars Congregationalists claim to have preserved the essential character of the New Testament churches.

The Congregational Principle Biblical. If this principle of the

independence of the local churches be conceded as an historical fact, then Congregationalism follows. This must be so, since Congregationalism is only the development of this principle into the methods of church fellowship. The only escape is in ecclesiastical rationalism, or in an inner light, or in tradition, or in decrees of an infallible church; that is, one or more of the other than scriptural standards must be the ground of confidence. The competency of the New Testament and of the apostles must be denied. This is done by the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Church, the controlling part of the Anglican Church, the Quakers, the Socinians, and the Rationalists, while others declare that Christ has not definitely specified the form of church polity; as though a polity not drawn out in detail could not have been determined by revealing its constitutive principle. We have shown that a single principle dominates each of the four great polities that divide Christendom, and that, therefore, no definitely specified form of church polity is needed in order to develop a complete system. The oak is in the acorn; and a polity is in its constitutive principle.—*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, pp. 128, 129.

Principles and Growth. Our polity is a matter of principles, and therefore a thing of life; being a matter of principles and a thing of life, it is also a subject of growth. The growing life must adapt itself to, and be modified by, the environments; it must also itself assimilate and modify the environments. That which makes it *sui generis* a true church polity cannot be modified; all else may be. Indeed, when we observe how changes carry the day in all matters of human thought and activities, we are ready to say, "All else except the fundamental and characteristic principles will be changed."—*Ladd:* Principles of Church Polity, p. 62.

Freedom of Development. If the Christian Church is a divine institution, under divine guidance, it must be free at any period to adapt the fundamental principles which it derives from Christ to the exigencies of its life. So far as it follows that divine guidance, it is not only free to do so, but competent to do so.—*Heermance:* Democracy in the Church, p. 2.

Power of Adaptation. There is no limit to the power of adaptation which our system possesses. We are not faithful to our ideal, if we do not avail ourselves of it. . . . So far as methods are concerned, the Church has power to put on institutions when it wants them, and to put them off when it is done with them.—*Macfadyen:* Constructive Congregational Ideals, pp. 116, 119.

Ecclesiastical Law a Gradual Development. Ecclesiastical Law did not arise in any sense as the working out of a principle, but it developed gradually, and, so to speak, from case to case.—*Harnack:* Constitution and Law of the Church, p. 145.

Is New Testament Usage Decisive? If we had a plain command of the Lord Jesus that the Church should forever be organized and conducted on a given plan, and precisely according to certain specific rules, the usage of the New Testament would be decisive for modern times and all

times. But what we have is not of this character. We have few definite commands, and these we regard as of permanent obligation, and we have some clear indications of apostolic usage; but the Church is still guided by the Holy Spirit and can work out its polity according to the needs of each successive age, holding always in plain view the fundamental principles which our Lord delivered to his disciples.

Permanence of Form of Church Government. The Discipline appointed by Jesus Christ for his Churches is not arbitrary, that one Church may set up and practice one forme, and another another forme, as each one shall please, but is one and the same for all Churches, and in all the Essentials and Substantialls of it unchangeable, and to be kept till the appearing of Jesus Christ. And if that Discipline which we here practice, be (as we are perswaded of it) the same which Christ hath appointed and therefore unalterable, we see not how another can be lawful; and therefore if a company of people shall come hither, and here set up and practice another, we pray you thinke not much, if we can not promise to approve them in so doing.—*Richard Mather:* Answer of the Elders, 83.

A certain presumption is created in favor of Congregational principles when it is shown that the polity of the apostolic churches was Congregational; but the presumption falls far short of a proof that the Congregational polity is of permanent divine authority. That the apostolic churches were Congregational does not even amount to a proof that Congregationalism is permanently expedient. Between a form of church government and those great truths concerning Christ and the Christian redemption which form the chief part of the substance of the New Testament there is an obvious difference. What is true once is true forever. That the Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of God, that He died for the remission of sins, that He rose from the dead, and received "all authority . . . in heaven and on earth," must have been just as true in the second century as in the first, and in the third century as in the second. But a form of church government which was the best possible organization for the Church of the first century may, perhaps, have been the worst possible organization for the Church of the third.—*Dale:* Congregational Manual, pp. 4, 5.

VI. THE MODERN CHURCH

What Is a Church? A church is an organized body of Christian people, associated for worship, religious instruction, and fellowship in service, meeting statedly together and acknowledging the same ecclesiastical usage or authority.

Dexter's Definition. A church is an association of the friends and followers of Christ, for the profession of Christian faith, and the performance of Christian duty. . . . Any company of people believing themselves to be, and publicly professing themselves to be Christians, associated by voluntary compact, on gospel principles, for Christian work and worship, is a church.—Congregationalism, pp. 25, 34.

Boynton's Definition. A church is a body of believers who covenant with each other for the purposes of worship, of mutual helpfulness in the religious life and of working together to extend the kingdom of God.—The Congregational Way, p. 51.

These and similar definitions describe the local body of believers who constitute the church. This is the primary use of the term in the New Testament. "The Church in Jerusalem," "the Church in Corinth," "the Church in Antioch" is the local congregation, composed of the believers in a given community, meeting statedly for worship and fellowship in the spirit of Christ. There is one and only one other use of the word church in the New Testament. That use is inclusive of the whole body of believers, and characterizes the definitions of Congregational authorities from the beginning.

John Robinson's Definition. A church is a company of faithful, holy people, with their seed, called by the Word of God into a public covenant with Christ, and among themselves, for mutual fellowship, in the use of all the means of God's glory and their salvation.—Apology.

Cambridge Platform. A Congregational church is by the institution of Christ a part of the militant visible church, consisting of a company of saints by calling, united into one body by a holy covenant, for the public worship of God, and the mutual edification one of another, in the fellowship of the Lord Jesus.—ii, 6.

Punchard's Definition. A Christian church is a voluntary association of persons professing repentance for sin and faith in Jesus Christ, united together by a solemn covenant for the worship of God and the celebration of religious ordinances.—This company

should ordinarily consist of no more than can conveniently and statedly meet together for religious purposes.—To this assembly all executive ecclesiastical or church power is intrusted by Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church.—History, 13, 14.

Henry Jacob's Definition. Every particular ordinary congregation of faithful people in England is a true and proper visible Church, *jure divino*—by right from God.—Reasons for Reforming.

The Latin Definition. The company of Christians knit together by the profession of the same faith, and the communion of the same sacraments, under the government of lawful pastors, and especially of the Roman bishop, as the only vicar of Christ on earth.—Bellarmine De Eccl. Mil., iii, 2.

The Church of England Definition. A congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinances, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.—Thirty-Nine Articles, art. xix.

The Augsburg Definition. A congregation of saints, in which the gospel is purely preached, and the sacraments are rightly administered.—Aug. Conf., art. vii.

The Belgic Definition. A true congregation or assembly of all faithful Christians, who look for their salvation only from Jesus Christ, as being washed by His blood and sanctified by His Spirit. —Belg. Conf., art. xxvii.

The Saxon Definition. A congregation of men embracing the gospel of Christ, and rightly using the sacraments.—Saxon Conf., art. xii.

The Four Conditions of a Church. First, there must be a company of Christians, a group of persons who have taken Him for their spiritual Master. . . . Second, there must be organization, or at least habitual association with an implied agreement to live together as a Christian company. . . . Third, the object of such association must be not merely occasional worship, but a common life, as including both work and worship. . . . Fourth, the company must "have his commandments and keep them." . . . Wherever, and just as far as, these four simple conditions are fulfilled, if it be only among two or three, there is a true church of Christ.—*Heermance:* Democracy in the Church, pp. 12, 13.

A Negative Definition. A Christian church, therefore, is not a confederation of many local congregations, under some one general head, whether that be a person, as bishop, patriarch, or pope; or under some system of government, as presbytery, synod, conference, or assembly. It is not an ecclesiastical system, extending over a wide area of country, claiming the right of control of all of similar faith within such territory.—*Hiscox:* Baptist Directory, p. 35.

What Is the Church? The answer to the question, "What is the Church?" must depend upon whether we are speaking of the visible or the invisible Church. The visible

Church is the whole body of those who are united under various names in different organizations for effective fellowship and Christian activity in the world, and whose acknowledged head is Jesus Christ. The invisible Church is inclusive of all who have the Spirit of Christ, whether members of the visible Church or not.

The Greek Definition. The Church is a divinely instituted community of men, united by the orthodox faith, the law of God, the Hierarchy, and the sacraments.—Full Catec. of the Orthodox Est. Church.

The Helvetic Definition. The Church is a community of believers, or saints, gathered out of the world, whose distinction is to know and to worship, through the Word and by the Spirit, the true God in Christ the Saviour.—Helv. Conf., art. vcii.

One Church and Many. The Church is one in nature, not one in number, as one ocean. Neither was the church at Rome, in the apostles' days, more one with the church at Corinth than was the baptism of Peter one with Paul's baptism, or than Peter and Paul were one.—*John Robinson:* Apology, in Hanbury, i, 374.

The Christian church is universal, not tied to nation, diocese, or parish, but consisting of many particular churches, complete in themselves.—*John Milton:* To Salmasius, in Hanbury, iii, 373.

The Organized Church. Christ teacheth, yea requireth, in Matt. 18: 17, that this visible and ministerial church shall be ever of one entire outward form, viz., of this special form of a particular ordinary congregation and none other, . . . and the very word *ecclesia* doth properly signify so.—*Henry Jacob:* Divine Beginning and Institution of Christ's Church.

Is the Visible the Same as the Invisible Church? The visible Church is not the same as the invisible Church. The two are related as the body and soul are related. As the body can grow out of proportion to the soul, so the visible Church may grow without the corresponding growth of the spiritual organization which is its soul. Conversely, as the body can be mutilated and still the life maintained, the invisible Church can survive the cutting off of portions of the visible Church. The invisible Church is composed of all who have the spirit of Christ everywhere. While many of them are outside the visible Church, it may reverently be hoped that there are many who are within the invisible organization. Not all are Israel who are of Israel. There are those in the visible Church who have not the

Spirit of Christ, and hence are not members of the true and invisible Church. There are those outside the visible Church who have the spirit of Christ, and hence are members of the invisible Church. "As many as are led by the spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8: 14). We have reason to believe that the invisible Church is very much larger than the visible Church.

Visible and Invisible. This militant Church is to be considered as invisible and visible. Invisible, in respect of their relation wherein they stand to Christ, as a body unto the head, being united unto him by the Spirit of God, and faith in their hearts. Visible, in respect of the profession of their faith, in their persons, and in particular churches. And so there may be acknowledged an universal visible Church.—Cambridge Platform, ii, 3.

There is a visible and invisible church. The invisible Church comprehends all real saints, or all of mankind, who will be finally sanctified and saved. But by a visible church we are to understand a society of visible saints. By visible saints are meant such as profess to be real saints and appear to be so in the eye of Christian charity. Such persons as these are the materials of which a church of Christ is formed.—*Emmons:* Platform Eccl. Govt., i.

Invisibility Above Visibility. The fact that there is upon earth a holy Christian people, redeemed by Christ, translated by faith out of the bondage of servants into the adoption of sons, bearing in itself life from God, can only be believed and not seen. The Church of Christ is an object of belief (or faith), therefore for the believer it is necessarily visible (in Word and Sacrament), but just as necessarily invisible to the world (in forms of Law). The invisibility of the Church of Christ removes it of necessity from the region of Law. The legally constituted church can never, as such, be the Church of Christ, and therefore can never speak in the name of the Church of Christ, can never enforce its ordinances as the ordering of the Church of Christ, as the ordering of the life of Christian men with God, because the Church of Christ is beyond the range of all legal order.—*Sohm:* Wesen u. Ursprung d. Katholizismus, pp. 11 et seq.

The Celestial Church. The Christian community in every city is not only a Church of God, but, like the latter, it belongs properly to heaven. . . . What may be called with some reservations the spiritual democracy within the whole Church, and therefore also within the individual community, comes into view very clearly in the attitude which Paul takes up in his epistles to the communities.—*Harnack:* Constitution and Law of the Church, p. 49.

The Church Militant and Triumphant. The Church, for all her advanced age, for all her apparent want of anxiety as to the imminence of the final judgment and for all the long future which she anticipates still on the earth, regards herself nevertheless as a provisional institution, a transitional organization. The Church of the world, called the Church Militant, is, as it were, the vestibule

of the Church triumphant, which is the Kingdom of heaven realized in eternity.—*Loisy:* The Gospel and the Church, p. 168.

What Is a Denomination? A denomination is a body of Christian churches united under a common name and recognizing common principles of faith and government.

What Is a Sect? A sect is an integral section or unified portion of the whole Church of Christ united under a common name or form of worship and fellowship. The term sect is essentially equivalent to that of denomination. But etymologically the term denomination is restricted to a body of churches bearing a common name, and the term sect is commonly used in a reprehensible sense. The term sect implies the state of being severed or cut off, and generally carries with it a certain implication of wilful division. As so used, it is an uncharitable term and often untrue in its implication.

What Is a Sectarian? Primarily a sectarian is any person belonging to a sect. In this sense the term could truthfully be applied to any Christian since the days of the apostles, and even to most Christians in the apostles' day. The term sectarian implies the spirit of wilful separation. A person may belong to a sect and be loyal to it in the sense of believing in its principles and faithfully laboring for its prosperity, but without manifesting or cherishing a spirit that could truthfully be called sectarian. In the same sense a citizen may vote for the candidates of a given political party without manifesting a spirit that can truthfully be described as partisan. A sectarian is one who possesses a sectarian spirit, and who for the sake of sect wilfully severs himself from other Christians, with whom he might be in fellowship.

Is It Possible for Any Christian to Escape Sectarianism? It is not possible for any modern Christian to be in fellowship with other Christians and not be in a sect. Any part is less than the whole, and no one part or member of the body of Christ is the whole body, or has any right to speak of itself as such. It is uncharitable for any Christian to

speak of any group of Christians as belonging to a sect unless he includes his own group or denomination in the same term.

Withdrawing from all sects merely carries sectarianism to its outermost limit. He who seeks catholicity by withdrawing from all fellowship with the organic life of other Christians thereby establishes an atomistic sect, the smallest possible, and often the narrowest conceivable. It is possible for a person to throw off allegiance to all human governments, but he does not thereby become a citizen of the whole world. Dr. Hale's "Man Without a Country" is not the ideal world-citizen, nor is the Christian without a church either logically or practically non-sectarian. Islanders are not the most broadly cosmopolitan people in the world. The prayer of Christ for his disciples is not that they may be taken out of the world, nor out of association with their fellow Christians; nor is it incumbent upon any one Christian presently to bring in the millennium of organic unity. It is his duty to use the world as not abusing it, and to live in that sect in which he can best serve God without cherishing a sectarian spirit. One of the first steps toward the cultivation of an unsectarian spirit should be each Christian's frank recognition of his own inevitable relationship to some particular branch of the Church of Christ, and to use that relationship in the spirit of the broadest Christian sympathy and largest practical co-operation. No citizen can be simultaneously a voter in every country, or a soldier under every flag. That man is the best citizen of the world who is the best citizen of his own country, and who holds that citizenship in the broadest, freest and most peace-loving spirit.

Is the Kingdom of Heaven Identical with the Church? The Kingdom of Heaven which Jesus preached finds its organic expression in the life of the visible Church. It does not follow, however, that the terms "kingdom" and "church" are synonymous. When these terms are used interchangeably in argument, confusion of thought is in-

evitable. Illustrations may be found in certain polemic articles based on the statement in Acts 1:3, in which it is affirmed that Jesus during the forty days spoke to the disciples "concerning the Kingdom of God." Certain sectarian writers have read into this statement a declaration that during the forty days Jesus must have revealed the whole system of church government which the adherents of these sects declare to be apostolic. The kingdom of heaven is within the disciples. It is not an outward and visible thing which one may locate, saying, "Lo here," and "Lo there." The Kingdom of God is invisible, but the organized church is a visible form of the invisible kingdom.

The Kingdom and the Church. Christ used the phrase kingdom of heaven, or its equivalent, as recorded by Matthew, thirty-six times; but he used the word church in only two passages (Matt. 16:18; 18:17). On the contrary, his apostles used the phrase kingdom of heaven, or its equivalent, in the Acts and Epistles, thirty-one times, and the word church one hundred and twelve times. The kingdom was becoming visible in organic form, and men spoke of the kingdom less and less, but of the churches more and more.—*Ross:* Church Kingdom, pp. 42, 43.

Is the Church Building the Church? In the New Testament, the place of worship is never spoken of as the church. The Puritans strongly objected to identifying the church with the conventicle or building in which its services were held. The church, in Congregational nomenclature, is the body of believers, and not the house in which they assemble. The Puritans were accustomed to speak of their place of worship as the meeting house. This was a fairly accurate translation of the term "synagogue." The custom of speaking of the church edifice as the church is, however, increasingly prevalent. Ordinarily the use of this term involves no misunderstanding, and it may be regarded as a permissible though not accurate use of the word. When so employed the term is used in a derivative sense.

Can a Church Exist Without Officers? A church can exist without officers, but is incomplete in its organization. The lack of officers cannot invalidate the existence of a

church. Logically and historically the church is before its officers.

Robert Browne on Church Officers. Againe we know that a church must needs be before anie particular elder can be chosen. For one partie can not make a church, neither beget bodilie children to be of a church but by an helper. And therefore no elder did breed or beget a Church except there was first a church where he was.—A New Years Guift, p. 28.

John Robinson on Church and Elder. Now if egge and bird be destroyed, I mean church & ministerye, as you imagine, & the one cannot be without the other, riddle & tell me which shall be first, & where we shall beginne, whether at the bird or at the egge, whether at the ministrye or att the church? Not att the church, for that (as you claim) must be gathered by a ministerie of Gods appoyntment. Not at the ministerie, for there can be none but Pastors and Teachers, and these cannott exercise a ministerie without a calling, nor haue a calling but from a true church, which must not be compelled by the maiestrate, but gathered by doctrine of the Word into a voluntarie covenant with God. Looke about you well and see that you arr wrapped up in your own cobweb, & eyther mst break itt and lett the fly go, or be swept awaie with it & her.—New Facts concerning John Robinson, p. 14.

John Robinson. Whence it followeth, that both church matters, yea, and churches also, may, and in some cases must, be begun without officers; yea, even where officers are, if they fail to do their duties, the people may enterprise matters needful, howsoever you will have the minister the only *primum movens*, and will tie all to his fingers.—Works, ii, 148.

Richard Hooker. A church, as *totum essentiale*, is and may be before the officers. A church is before its officers. However, a church is incomplete without its officers.—Survey, part i, 10-93; ii, 2. ii, 2.

Isaac Chauncey. A church must be constituted before it can choose a pastor. A church is empowered from Christ to choose its own ministerial officers, before such a church hath elders or deacons. These are plain from the nature of a body corporate.—Divine Inst. Cong. Churches, 49-50.

Is There Salvation Outside the Church? It is a favorite doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church that outside the Church there is no salvation. There is a sense in which this is true, for all who are saved have membership in the true Church of Christ; but it is not true in any such sense as that salvation is limited to membership in any particular denomination or form of government. There was salvation before the organization of the Church. There is salvation far beyond the geographical and ecclesiastical bonds of the

visible church. But in the very real sense in which it may be affirmed that all who are saved have membership in the Church of Christ, it is certainly true that outside of that Church there is no salvation.

The Church Not a Voluntary Society. A church is not strictly a voluntary society; for the word voluntary makes the will or option of the members a fundamental thing in its formation. This is false and pernicious in the extreme, implying as it does that a believer may rightly stay out of the local church, if he choose to do so. The believer is already in the church-kingdom in virtue of being a believer, of which church-kingdom every true church is a normal and fundamental manifestation. He cannot stay out of the local church, therefore, without violating the essential law of the church-kingdom, as well as the express command of Christ. He virtually denies the Lord that bought him. He refuses to manifest with others what he is as a redeemed sinner. And no wonder, when such is the case, that it soon became a maxim of the Roman Catholic Church: Out of the church there is no salvation. This maxim, hardened into a universal rule, is less pernicious when we take a true conception of local churches as manifestations of the church-kingdom, than the position that churches are voluntary societies.—*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, p. 171.

What Is the Protestant Church? Technically and properly there is no such thing as the Protestant Church, but the term as commonly used in America is employed to designate those churches which do not acknowledge the authority of the Pope.

The term Protestant is frequently objected to as being in its nature a negative term. It is not necessarily so. The following quotation is from the pen of Bishop Williams of the Protestant Episcopal Church:

"Protestant" has come to describe simply churches that are not subject to Rome, and therefore truly describes our own communion. That is all it means to the popular mind.

Originally, to be sure, it had a purely negative significance. It was derived from the protest of the Reformers against the errors and abuses of the Roman communion. And we have not yet gotten beyond the need of that negative connotation of the term.

But the name "Protestant" has more and more acquired a positive and constructive connotation. "Protestant" has come to mean "pro-test-ant" in the original sense of the word. It is a case of reversion to etymology. It stands for testimony and witness not simply against the errors and abuses of Rome, but in behalf of certain positive truths and rights and privileges which are our most precious heritage from the Reformation and the Renaissance. It stands for liberty of conscience, freedom of the intellect, the democratic ideal and movement, modern knowledge and learning, and the spirit of progress.

Protestants. A mere calumny it is that we profess only a negative religion. Romanists do call our religion a negative religion. But in the meantime they forget that we maintain all those aricles and truths which are contained in any of the ancient creeds of the Church, which I hope are more than negatives. "Protestants" did not get their name by protesting against the Church of Rome, but by protesting . . . against her errors and superstitions. Nor is protestation itself such an unheard of thing in the very heart of religion; for the sacraments . . . are called . . . "visible signs protesting the Faith." Now if the sacraments be *signa protestantia*, signs protesting, why may not men also, and without all offense, be called "Protestants," since by receiving the true sacraments and by refusing them which are corrupted, they do but protest the sincerity of their faith against that doctrinal corruption which hath invaded the great sacrament of the Eucharist and other parts of religion? I glory in the name of Protestant. My lords, I am as innocent in this business of religion, as free from all practice or so much as thought of practice for . . . anyway blemishing the Protestant religion established in the Church of England as I was when my mother first bare me into the world. I pray God his truth, the true Protestant religion here established, sink not! God of His mercy preserve the true Protestant religion amongst us!—*Archbishop Laud.*

What Is the Holy Catholic Church? The Holy Catholic Church is the whole body of believers, now and in all ages. We can be content with no smaller definition. No one organization has any right to a monopoly of this name, nor can the incorporation of the word Catholic into any corporate name constitute a peculiar claim upon or right to its use. On this subject Bishop Williams, of Michigan, has written strong words:

The significance of names cannot be decided by their etymology alone. Names are *menstrua*. They take up and carry in solution history and experience, and thereby acquire a popular interpretation. For example, the word idiot means by derivation and etymology a private person, or a private citizen. It means in actual usage an imbecile. You might in a moment of temper call an irascible friend an idiot and then try to take refuge in your etymology, but I fear it would prove no sufficient defense against his justifiable wrath.

Even so the term Catholic means by etymology universal. That was its original significance, and Arians and Athanasians alike claimed it. Later, it attached to a certain type of doctrine and practice which won out and so became established as orthodox. But to-day it has practically lost both significances and has come to describe the ecclesiastical institution subject to the jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome. And we cannot change that meaning by any action we may take. The name American Catholic would require perpetual explanation, and then remain forever inexplicable to the

popular mind. We cannot find any secure refuge against popular misunderstanding in our etymology, or even historical interpretation.

The Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is the whole company of those that are elected, redeemed, and in time effectually called from the state of sin and death, unto a state of grace and salvation in Jesus Christ.—*Cambridge Platform:* ii, 1.

Papal Theory Greek, Not Roman. The origin of the papal system is not in the constitution of the primitive churches. "This volume further demonstrates," says Bishop A. Cleveland Coxe, in his introduction to the American edition of the Antevicent Fathers, "what I have so often touched upon—the historic fact that primitive Christianity was Greek in form and character, Greek from first to last, Greek in all its forms of dogma, worship, and polity." And he refers to Dean Stanley as inviting "us to reform the entire scheme of our ecclesiastical history by presenting the eastern apostolic churches as the main stem of Christendom, of which the Church of Rome itself was for three hundred years a mere colony, unfelt in theology except by contributions to the Greek literature of Christians, and wholly unconscious of those pretensions with which . . . the fabulous decretals afterwards invested a succession of primitive bishops in Rome, wholly innocent of anything of the kind.—*Ross:* Church Kingdom, p. 47.

Can We Depend on External Authority? We cannot depend upon the authority of men for our right to continue in the world the work which Jesus committed to his disciples, nor if we did could we be sure that any one man or system now extant monopolizes that authority. Those lean on a broken staff who depend on formal succession through the succession of Rome or other alleged unbroken line.

For lists of the early bishops of Rome we depend upon three sources, no two of which agree. This is the way the lists begin, as they are preserved by Irenæus, Tertullian and Augustine:

Irenæus	Tertullian	Augustine
1. Peter	1. Peter	1. Peter
2. Linus	2. Clemens	2. Linus
3. Anacletus	3. Linus	3. Clemens
4. Clemens	4. Anacletus	4. Anacletus

On these three conflicting lists, Jacob remarks: "Even so well known a name as that of Clement is placed in three different positions, appearing as second, third and fourth." The more remote the historians from the time of these men the greater their confidence in their ability to make an ac-

curate list. Eusebius, in the fourth century, even undertook to assign dates to their several episcopates! We simply do not know who succeeded Peter as Bishop of Rome, nor whether Peter was ever there. And if we are thus uncertain about Rome, what is to be said of the rest? Those who depend on such a line for their right to preach hang by a very slender and badly frayed thread.

VII. THE ORGANIZATION OF A CHURCH

Who May Organize a Church? The right to organize a church is inherent in the members who compose it. Any company of persons who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and who live sufficiently near to each other to meet statedly for worship and to unite in Christian activities, may organize themselves into a church. They may choose their own form of government, adopt their own method of electing their officers, and, so far as their methods of government and worship do not conflict with the rights of other organizations or disobey the laws of God or of the land, they may enjoy complete liberty within the church which they establish.

John Robinson. And for the gathering of a church I do tell you, that in what place soever, whether by preaching the gospel by a true minister, by a false minister, by no minister, or by reading and conference, or by any other means of publishing it, two or three faithful people do arise, separating themselves from the world into the fellowship of the gospel, they are a church truly gathered, though never so weak.—Works, ii, 232.

Samuel Hopkins. The word church signifies an assembly of men, called and collected together for some special purpose. The Church of Christ on earth consists of those who are united together as professed friends to Christ and believers in Him, are under explicit engagements to serve Him. . . . Whenever a number of persons voluntarily unite together, under profession of holiness in Christ, to attend to his institutions and ordinances, they are a church.—Works, Vol. IX, p. 148.

Cambridge Platform. The matter of the church in respect of its quantity, ought not to be of greater number than may ordinarily meet together conveniently in one place; nor ordinarily fewer than may conveniently carry on church-work. Hence when the Holy Scripture makes mention of the saints combined into a church-estate, in a town or city where was but one congregation, it usually calleth those saints the Church, in the singular number.—iv, 4.

How May a Church Be Organized with a Council? The prospective members of a church should first hold a preliminary meeting and agree upon their desire to organize a church, and adopt a constitution and confession of faith. Having taken these preliminary steps, they may join in issuing a letter missive, to be signed by a committee of

their own membership, inviting the Congregational churches of the vicinage to convene in council for the purpose of organizing a Congregational church. The list of churches to be invited to such a council should be prepared with care, and advice should be sought from the Advisory, or Home Missionary, or Church Extension Committee of the District Association, or from a neighboring pastor of experience.

The council being duly organized, the list of prospective members should be submitted. The letters of those who are to join by letter should be presented for examination, or a statement that they have been examined and that the examination is satisfactory should be presented to the council. It will often be a convenience if a map is prepared, in order that the Council may be shown what is the field of the proposed church and what are its geographical relations to other churches.

The council, having received all statements which it deems necessary, concerning membership, territory, prospect of self-support, and the general need of the organization, may by vote be by itself. The council being by itself should carefully consider the questions submitted to it, and if it seems evident that the church ought to be organized, it may return to the meeting with its finding, and report its approval.

The moderator will then assemble the prospective members, and will call upon the scribe to read the vote by which the council has expressed its approval of the organization of the church. A motion is then in order, and should be made and seconded by two prospective members of the church, in substance, as follows: "Voted, that we now proceed to the organization of a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be known as ..... Congregational Church."

The council may now proceed at once to the completion of the organization. Those prospective members who have not been baptized should receive baptism. The moderator should read the church covenant, and call for its acceptance.

Either he, himself, or a member appointed for the purpose, should offer the right hand of fellowship.

It is in order, however, that these services of assent to the covenant, and of baptism and the right hand of fellowship, be postponed until the evening or until a convenient Sunday. In either event, the church, under the direction of the council, should proceed to the adoption of constitution, by-laws and form of admission of members. In all these matters the prospective members of the church will vote; the moderator and scribe of the council acting in their respective capacities on behalf of the church until the organization is complete.

The constitution, covenant, and confession of faith being adopted, the council will resume its session, and will appoint certain of its own members to take such further steps as may be advisable in any public service of recognition. The officers of the council should report the organization of the church to the District Association, and commend the church to the fellowship of that body.

How May a Church Be Organized Without Council? The neighborhood should first be canvassed carefully, and a list of prospective members should be obtained. Those who are to become members should carefully consider whether there is real need of a church in their neighborhood, whether it can be organized without encroaching upon the parish of some other church, and whether it can attain to self-support immediately or within a reasonable time. If it cannot support itself from the outset, but expects missionary aid from the denomination, the prospective members should seek advice from the officers of the state or local home missionary society.

It will often be found advisable to circulate in advance a simple leaflet setting forth the purposes of the organization. Such a leaflet may set forth the essential features of the Congregational system, particularly as affording a basis of union for people of different denominations, and have a detachable leaf or card containing a simple prelim-

inary covenant expressing the willingness of those who sign this card to become charter members of a new church. When these cards have been gathered, it will often be found of advantage to secure the signatures of the prospective members to a simple preliminary covenant affording the basis of a temporary organization. The following has been used successfully in cases of this kind:

"For the glory of God, for the service of our fellow men, for mutual assistance in our Christian life, and for the blessing of this neighborhood and of our children, the undersigned agree to become charter members of a Congregational church."

It is of advantage that such a preliminary covenant be extremely brief and free from all technicalities.

A preliminary meeting may now be held, and a committee appointed to present a constitution, covenant and articles of faith. Very often, however, such preliminary meeting can be dispensed with altogether. Those who are the leaders of the movement may prepare in advance for the first draft of a constitution and articles of faith and present them for adoption at a later meeting for organization.

A formal call should be issued for the organization, and become a part of the minutes of the meeting. It may be published in a local paper, or sent individually to prospective members. Such a call, however, is not legally necessary for the first meeting. After a church is organized and has a definite body of members, notice of meetings must be conveyed according to some established method. In the interest of good order, it is well that the preliminary meeting should be publicly announced and a general invitation extended, but it is not necessary to the legality of the undertaking. Where two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord, the right of organization is inherent.

An ample and somewhat elaborate constitution will be found in Barton's Congregational Manual, pp. 231-239. A briefer form, and

one quite adequate for a small church, will be found in the same work, pp. 262-264.

The following directions will serve for the organization of a church without the aid of a council:

The prospective members being assembled according to notice or by mutual agreement, the meeting may be called to order, either by one of these prospective members, as, for example, the chairman of the committee on constitution, or by a neighboring pastor, or by the chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Association. It is not necessary that the chairman of the meeting be one of the prospective members, and often it is better that he should not be. A temporary clerk should be elected, and the call of the meeting read. The names of the persons who have signified their intention of uniting with the church should be read. If a sufficient number of these are found to be present, the business of the meeting may proceed. It is not necessary that every person who has signed the preliminary covenant should be present, but it is advisable that a majority should be there, and that all those who are expected to become members should have been notified of the meeting. A permanent moderator and scribe should now be chosen, and prayer should be offered, either by the presiding officer or by some person designated by him.

The persons who are to unite with the new church by letter from other churches should be asked to produce their credentials. If there are but a few of these letters, they may be handed to the scribe and publicly read and passed upon. If there are many, it is well to appoint a committee to examine the credentials, to certify that they are in due form, and to submit a definite list of those who are to become charter members by letter.

The persons desiring to unite on confession of faith should also present their names and requests, and these persons should be examined as to their Christian faith and life. Such examination, however, if it is likely to be protracted, should be had before a committee, who later should

report the results of their examination, recommending for church membership those whom they believe to be qualified. These two committees may be chosen either from among the prospective members or from ministers and representatives of other churches present, or the committees may be dispensed with altogether. Where the preliminary steps have been taken with care and the letters have previously been gathered and inspected, it will often be found possible to pass upon the whole question of membership without delay or reference to a committee.

The two lists of names now being before the meeting, it is in order to ask whether there is objection to any name proposed. The prospective members have a right to be the judges of their own membership and to say with whom they are willing to associate together in the membership of the church. If they believe that any person who is proposed for membership is unworthy, they have a right by vote to decline to associate with that person as a charter member of the church. If no objection is raised to any one name, the names need not be voted upon separately.

A list of prospective members having thus been made up and accepted, a motion is in order, and may be in substance as follows: "Voted, that we now proceed to the organization of a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be known as the ..... Congregational Church." This motion, being made and seconded, is open for discussion. If any doubt remains, it should now be made clear that such a church is needed; that the field is not already covered by neighboring churches; that these prospective members should be organized as an independent church rather than with a branch of some existing church; that the church which it is proposed to organize has good prospect of reaching self-support within a reasonable period, and that those who are to constitute the church are people of such standing in the community as represent its best life and interests and promise the welfare of the undertaking. These matters being established, the motion may be

adopted. All the prospective members who have been approved for membership have right to vote on this motion.

The covenant, statement of doctrine, form for reception of members, constitution and by-laws may now be presented and adopted; or, if these are not prepared, a committee may be appointed to prepare them.

It is often wise to adjourn the meeting at this point, and after all the business details have been arranged, to complete the organization in a Sunday covenant service, and to hold the charter membership open until that date. It will frequently be found that some people who have been hesitating concerning the church organization will be impressed by the simple dignity of the organization and will gladly unite at this stage, especially if the privilege of charter membership is extended.

Moreover, the Sunday covenant service may be made a very impressive one. The additional members having been received by vote, the minutes of the meeting for organization may be read and approved, and the whole body of prospective members may then come forward to receive the right hand of fellowship. Those who have not been baptized should be baptized at this time, and the service may appropriately be followed by a communion service, and by a charge delivered to the church.

It will be found that the method of organizing a church in two meetings, one upon a week day, called especially for the transaction of business, and the other called upon a Sunday for the purpose of uniting in a covenant, possesses marked practical advantages. The formal business can nearly all be transacted at the earlier meeting and the Sunday service can be one of spiritual impulse. The two, however, should be considered as two sessions of a single meeting, and so should be recorded in the minutes. Before the adjournment of the first meeting a motion should be adopted that the meeting adjourn to a definite date, which may properly be a Sunday one or two weeks removed.

Without Council in Early Days. Though it be not usual, yet is it lawful to gather a church without other churches and ministers advise.—*Thomas Goodwin:* Works, Vol. IV, p. 107.

With Council in Early Days. At gathering of churches, one of the messengers examines the candidates; and, on acknowledging their covenant, he pronounces them a true church, and gives them the right hand of fellowship. So did Mr. Welde at the founding of Weymouth Church.—*Lechford:* Plain Dealing.

How May a Church Be Organized by an Association? If it is desired that the District Association itself organize the church, the Association may be invited to a special meeting for that purpose. The meeting should be called by the scribe of the Association according to its rules. The regular quorum of the Association suffices for a meeting for the organization of the church. A majority is not required, as in the case of a council. The moderator of the Association presides and the work proceeds, as in the case where the church is organized by a council. In case it is deemed advisable to adjourn the meeting to a subsequent date, and to complete it in a Sunday service, the Association may appoint certain of its members to represent it in that service and to do those things necessary to complete the organization. These members, or a majority of them, are authorized thus to conduct the public service in accordance with the vote of the Association, even though they be not a quorum of the Association, but they are not authorized to take any other action. No power is delegated to them other than to represent the Association within the definite limits of their instructions.

Room for Variety. One of the great virtues of Congregationalism is that it is not run in the mould of a mechanical uniformity. Under our polity the machinery for oversight may vary in different sections of the country, both in kind and complexity. Our polity is elastic enough to allow variety without straining the fellowship between groups of churches. It leaves room for wide experimenting, and the adoption of machinery which experience elsewhere has shown to be wise.—*Heermance:* Democracy in the Church, p. 131.

How May a Church Secure Fellowship? A self-governing church may secure the fellowship of other churches, similarly organized, either in connection with or subse-

quent to its own organization. When it is proposed to organize a Congregational church, it is both safer and more courteous to secure in advance the advice and co-operation of the sisterhood of churches with which it is proposed to unite. The right of organization is inherent in the local body of believers; the right of recognition belongs to the sisterhood of churches with which the local church expects fellowship. It is sometimes expedient, though not necessary or always advisable, that a council be called when a church is about to be organized. Often it is better that the District Association within whose geographical bounds the proposed church is situated, be asked to act officially in a conciliary capacity. Mistakes are often avoided if this method is pursued. Where for any reason a church is to be organized without the co-operation of a council or Association, advice should be sought from the Advisory Committee of the District Association, if that or a similar committee exists, or from a neighboring pastor of standing and experience.

How Is a Congregational Church Recognized? A church organized without council may properly call a council to recognize it as a Congregational church. To the council should be submitted a full report of the proceedings of organization, its declaration of faith, form of admission, and rules. The council, convening on the day appointed and being duly organized, should examine these, give advice in any matters of irregularity, and, if it approve the organization, should so certify in its finding. The Council further may recommend the church to the fellowship of the District Association.

Two copies of the minutes of the council should be prepared and signed by the moderator and scribe. One of these should be furnished to the clerk of the church, entered in its record book, and permanently preserved. The other should be furnished to the registrar of the District Association. At the next meeting of the District Association the church should be represented by its pastor and a delegate.

Formal application should then be made for admission. Resolutions to this effect may be substantially in the following words:

"Voted that the ..... Congregational Church in ....., organized ....., 19..., and recognized by a council of the vicinage on ....., 19..., hereby applies for admission to the ..... Association as a Congregational church in good fellowship and regular standing."

How May a Church Be Disbanded? Sometimes through changes in the population of a community it becomes advisable to disband a church, or to combine it with another church. In such a case competent advice should be sought to secure all legal rights in the premises. This is particularly important because of the wide divergence of the statutes in the several states. If money has been invested in the church work by the Home Missionary Society, or in the building by the Church Building Society, care should be taken to secure all the legal and moral equities involved. Public notice should be given that all members may have knowledge of the proposed action. In any case of doubt a council should be called or the advice of the District Association should be sought. If any considerable number of the members still believe the church to be needed and are willing to continue its responsibilities, respectful heed should be given to their desires and promises, without, however, jeopardizing important interests for what may be a too confident hope. If it should finally appear that the church is no longer needed, the following steps may be taken: First, it may be voted that this church proceed to take the necessary steps to dispose of its property and to disband. Secondly, the trustees should be directed to dispose of the property, either by deed to the Congregational Church Building Society or in such other way as to provide for the proper securing of the interests of the denomination. A bill of sale of the personal property should also be authorized. Thirdly, it should be voted that the clerk have authority to grant letters to all members now on the rolls of this

church to any church with which the church is in fellowship. Fourthly, it should be voted that the records, when completed, be deposited with the registrar of the Association or with the State Conference. Finally, all necessary business being completed, it should be voted that this church do now disband.

By What Majority Vote May a Church Disband? The answers to this question are various and by no means consistent. It sometimes has been held that only a unanimous vote can disband a church. Sometimes it has been maintained that a majority vote is sufficient. Neither of these rules can be maintained. The disbanding of a church is first of all an important amendment of its constitution, and no smaller vote can disband a church than that which would amend its constitution in its most vital part. If the rules of a church provide that the constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote, then in the absence of a particular rule, upon due notice from the pulpit a specified time in advance, an affirmative vote by a two-thirds majorits of those present and voting can disband a church. If the rules of the church contain any special provision as that "No essential change in doctrine or polity of this church shall be made without previous notice to all its members"; or, if for such change a larger vote than two-thirds be required, the largest vote and the widest notice required by the constitution for any action is necessary for the disbanding of a church.

Dr. Dexter maintained that a unanimous vote would be necessary to disband a church; and then, with what was for him a singular inconsistency, he provided a method whereby a bare majority might do so, and that with the harshness of church discipline:

> **Rights of the Minority.** Should a minority resist, and claim to be the church still, in plea that a majority vote cannot take away their covenant right to belong to that church; it may be replied that only majority action gave them that right, and that an unreasonable and contumacious dissent from the opinion of the major portion of their brethren backed by the judgment of an impartial council, is entitled to no respect, and becomes in reality an offense

worthy of censure. Should opposition still be maintained, the way becomes open for dealing with them for such offense, and thus making it possible for unanimous assent to the decision of the body in its majority.—Handbook, pp. 117, 118.

We confess surprise at this advice from so sane and just an authority as Dr. Dexter. Neither of his answers can be defended successfully. A bare majority may not disband a church, much less arbitrarily excommunicate a minority in the process. Nor is a unanimous vote to be required. In the Salem case, referred to by Cummings in the following quotation, neither of the two contentions can be allowed. A church can disband, but such a proceeding is a radical amendment of its constitution, and a majority vote is insufficient.

It is understood to have been recently decided by a council, in a case in Salem, Mass., that a majority have no right to disband a church and divide the property. On the one hand, the sovereignty of the majority was pleaded; and, on the other, that the majority have no right to repudiate their own covenant engagements.—Cong. Dict., Majorities.

May Two Churches Unite? Two or more churches, both being incorporated and owning their own property, may unite. The essential proceedings necessary to such a union are: First, that each church separately shall vote in favor of such a union. The vote necessary to such an action is that required for the amendment of the constitution, and notice should be given in advance, in accordance with the particular rules of each church. Secondly, the two churches should by separate vote agree upon a time for a joint meeting, at which time the merger shall be made complete. Thirdly, the two churches being assembled in joint meeting, the merger may be effected either by (a) the blending of the two into an organization which perpetuates both churches; (b) the merging of one church into the other, or (c) the formation of a new church, composed of the membership of both.

The first of these is the most difficult. It is not easy for two churches to become one and retain the form of organization of two. The details for such an organization

must be wrought out subject to the rules of the two uniting churches.

The union is far simpler where one church is merged into the other. It may be done in the following order: First, the trustees of the church that is to be dissolved by vote convey their property, both real and personal, to the other organization. Secondly, the clerk is authorized to grant letters to other churches to any members who are unwilling to join in the merger, and to issue letters for all of the members addressed to the church with which it is planned to unite. Such letters should be prepared in advance and be ready to be signed as soon as the vote is cast. The names of all those who are to unite with the proposed church may be included in a single letter. All these papers being duly signed and delivered, a vote to disband is in order. Care should be taken that this vote is not passed until all the preliminaries of the merger have been attended to.

The third method also is comparatively simple. A new church being organized and incorporated, each of the older churches may convey its property and transfer its membership to the new organization. In some respects this is the simplest method of the three, but it has the serious disadvantage of sacrificing the past history of the two organizations. This may be avoided if care is taken to include in the enacting clause of the vote of merger a statement that this church perpetuates in its organization both the merging churches and considers as its date of organization the date of the older church of the two.

The choice of name does not necessarily depend upon the question which of these three forms is employed. For instance, if the First and Second Churches of a given town unite, the union may perpetuate the organization of the Second Church and the name and history of the First Church; or, they may adopt the constitution and covenant of the First Church and continue the history of both

churches, but adopt a new name, as for instance, Plymouth Church.

The principles and methods laid down in this section are valid; yet the union of two or more churches is so delicate a matter, involving so many vested interests, that it is wise to consult a good Christian lawyer and someone expert in church polity. In some of the older states a special act of the legislature has been found necessary to effect mergers and at the same time to preserve historic and vested rights.

The new First Church in Chicago combines the First and Union Park churches, but takes the date of the new organization in 1910. The combination might have been so accomplished as to retain the date of the original First Church, 1851.

What Are the Rights of the Minority in Cases of Merger? In case two churches unite against the will of some of the members of one or the other of the merging churches, the minority members lose none of their rights by the merger. They are entitled to vote against it if they choose. If, however, their vote does not prevail and the merger is effected, it is their Christian duty to accept the situation. They are entitled to ask for letters to other churches if they wish. If they do not desire such letters, they are still members in good standing in the united church. The church should so regard them and they should so regard themselves. Their covenant duty is to seek the edification, purity, and peace of the church. They should do this consistently and conscientiously, and the church should bear with them patiently in the pain they feel by reason of the merger. If they cannot become reconciled to the new organization, they should ask for letters and withdraw in a spirit of love, but if they stay, as they have a perfect right to stay, their privileges and duties are in no way impaired by their having voted with the minority. All the privileges and all the duties which were theirs before the merger continue in the united church. So long as the question of the merger is under discussion they have a

right to vote and speak against it. After the merger is effected they should desist from further opposition.

May a Church Divide? A church may divide by vote. This action, however, is unusual. It is very different from that which one church takes in uniting with another. A church cannot by majority vote dismiss a group of members against their individual choice. It cannot create a new church by setting apart certain of its members who are to form it whether they will or no. A parish may divide geographically, but it cannot compel one of its members who lives beyond the dividing line to transfer his membership to the organization not of his choice. In a case where a church is removing from the center to one side of its parish and finds it advisable to plant an organization on the farther side, it is seldom advisable to attempt a horizontal division of the membership. It will usually be found better to form a new organization on the opposite side from that where the mother church is located and to advise members living upon that side of the town or parish to transfer their relations to it as charter members. In such cases regular letters would be given to the members of the newer church. But such a vote is advisory only. If the members resident in the neighborhood of the new church prefer to retain their membership in the old church, they have that right.

How May Other Churches Become Congregational? An undenominational church may by vote become Congregational. It may and should also vote to apply for admission into the Congregational Association within whose bounds it is situated. On being received by that body, it becomes a Congregational church in good standing and in fellowship. A church affiliated with a denomination other than Congregational should first sever its relations with that denomination by withdrawing from conference, presbytery, or other ecclesiastical connections, in order to unite with the district association of Congregational churches.

If any members in such a church vote against uniting

with the Congregational denomination, they are not thereby cut off from membership in the church. In case a Universalist or Unitarian church votes to become Congregational, and certain of its members vote against the change and refuse to accept the covenant or conform to the doctrinal views supposed to be involved in the change, these members do not thereby cut themselves off from fellowship with the church of which they have been members, or of the denomination into which they come. They still are members in good and regular standing, and should be treated with great consideration. They on their part should also remember their obligation to seek the welfare of the church of which they still are members and of the denomination of which they now have become a part. If they continue to object to the change and demand dismission, they should be dismissed affectionately, and to the church of their choice. Ordinarily such dismission should be requested prior to the merger, but if the request is delayed and is made later, it is both courteous and expedient to grant the request.

VIII. THE CONDUCT OF CHURCH BUSINESS

What General Rules Govern Church Business? Each local church makes its own rules for the conduct of its meetings. When a rule of the local church provides for the transaction of business according to a particular form or method, such rule takes precedence over all general rules. Such rule is to be interpreted, however, in the light of general principles and of denominational usage. Where no specific rule exists, general parliamentary law and usages of the denomination govern. It is well for every church to have in its by-laws a reference to some work of acknowledged repute and standing to which final appeal is to be made in matters not provided for in local rules. Such a by-law may read as follows: "In all matters not provided for in the constitution of the church, or in these by-laws and rules, this church shall be governed by ..... Congregational Manual."

What Is the Jurisdiction of the Local Church? The local church has supreme authority in matters pertaining to its own government, but the principle of autonomy goes farther in its application than the local church. As the local church is self-governing in its own sphere, so is the District Association within its sphere, and the State Conference in matters for which the churches of the state have created it. The principle of local autonomy does not mean that any one local church shall rule a conference of churches. As the local church is supreme in its own internal affairs, so the churches constituting an Association possess an autonomy in matters of associated concern.

In matters concerning the denomination as a whole, the National Council has its own autonomy. It cannot legislate for any state conference, or district association, or even for any local church; at the same time, the principle of local autonomy does not mean that the single local church has authority over all the churches. The smaller body cannot be compelled to obey the larger one; neither can the

smaller body veto, excepting for itself and within its own sphere, the finding of the larger body. Within the local church itself the authority of that church is greater than that of the State Conference, or even of the National Council; but in the transaction of the business of the state or nation, the local church is one among many, and has as much authority as is expressed in the votes of its accredited delegates, and in their combined wisdom expressed in a deliberative body wherein all other churches within the same territory are entitled to like representation.

Independence of Local Church. Each Congregational church is independent of every other church. Any number of believers may come together and form a church. These believers, thus associated, are responsible to themselves alone under their acknowledged Head, Jesus Christ. If there is any relation this communion may hold with any other church, it is not of any organized sort, since no other church, or any number of churches, may legislate for it.—*Asher Anderson:* Congregational Faith and Practice, p. 5.

Are Home Missionary Churches Self-Governing? Any church while receiving home missionary aid should recognize the guidance of the body through which the aid is extended. To call a pastor who is disapproved by the society which is expected to aid in his support is not reasonable independence. A church which has received home missionary aid or assistance from the Church Building Society and which proposes to sever denominational relations before it has repaid that aid, displays not reasonable independence but a close approach to dishonesty. The fact that a church is financially dependent does not, however, destroy its autonomy. It might be said that a dependent church is not an independent church; but that would be true only within certain limits. A dependent church loses none of its independence, excepting within the sphere of that dependence. Financial dependence involves certain principles of financial honor which should be sacredly recognized; but the dependence ends with the discharge of such obligations as grow out of those financial relations. We meet, therefore, the paradox that a dependent church may, notwithstanding, be an independent church, but the

dependence imposes certain restrictions upon the independence.

What Constitutes Final Authority? The civil courts have repeatedly been called upon to decide questions between local churches and the denominations to which they belong. Two very different sets of decisions have been handed down, based on the question whether the local church is or is not self-governing according to the usage of its own denomination. The United States Supreme Court has decided that in any given denomination the highest ecclesiastical court within the denomination will be recognized by the civil authority. In Congregationalism, therefore, each local church is supreme in all matters pertaining to its own government. In matters which relate to the lawful claims of the denomination through missionary societies, district associations, or other bodies, the denomination has a right to safeguard itself for the protection of vested rights.

How Should Church Meetings Be Called? The ordinary business of a local church may be transacted at any midweek meeting, or in case of necessity at the Sunday service, without previous notice. No question involving the appropriation of money, or important change in the polity of the church, or amendment to its system of doctrine or rules, should be undertaken without previous public notice. Constitutions commonly specify the manner in which such notices should be given. In the absence of specific rules, it may be accepted as a sound principle that no measure involving a considerable expenditure of money, or sale, or incumbrance of the church property, or alteration in the church building, or change in the constitution or rules should be adopted at the same meeting at which it is proposed. Having been introduced, it should lie upon the table for at least one week, and announcement of it be made from the pulpit, and if the action proposed is radical, a larger and more general notice should be given. In general, propositions contemplating the expenditure of money

should previously be considered by the trustees, and matters affecting the polity, doctrine or spiritual concerns of the church should be considered by the deacons or prudential committee. This is not legally necessary, but it is a courteous recognition of those in office. It tends to assure care in the preparation of business, and a motion gains greatly in favor if the person proposing it is able to state that this has received the approval of the official board whom most nearly it concerns.

How Are Special Meetings Called? Special meetings may usually be called by the pastor, or by one of the official boards, or by the petition of a group of members, not less than five in number. Where a special meeting is called, the purpose for which it is called should be definitely stated in the notice. Such a notice might read as follows:

"A special meeting of the church is hereby called in the lecture room of the church at 8 o'clock on Wednesday evening, January 25, to consider the question of purchasing a new organ."

As such a call involves both music and money, it might properly be signed by the Music Committee and the trustees. If the matter involved were a change in the creed or order of service, it might properly be signed by the deacons. Any considerable group of members, however, may call a meeting for a particular purpose, public notice being given from the pulpit in regular form. Many churches specify a minimum number of members, as five, seven or nine, who may call a special meeting. It is more dignified that meetings should be called by the pastor or an official board, and they will rarely refuse. Where they do refuse, however, the rights of the members are to be protected as above stated.

What Constitutes a Quorum? Every church ought to provide in its rules for a quorum. The rules should state the smallest number of members who may legally do business in the name of the church. Where no quorum is provided for in the rules, the business of the church may be

transacted by any number of members assembled in a meeting regularly called.

If a quorum is present at the beginning of the meeting, it is assumed to be present throughout unless the question of a quorum is raised. If a group of members wish to defeat the evident purpose of the majority of a small meeting by withdrawing and leaving the meeting without a quorum, they should distinctly call attention of the chair to their proposed departure, and to the fact that the meeting will then lack a quorum.

May a Meeting Transact Other Business than That for Which It Is Called? A special meeting of the church may not properly transact any other business than that for which it is called. For instance, if a group of five members of the church request the reading of a notice on a given Sunday morning that a meeting be held on some evening during the week "to consider the general interests of the church," such a meeting has no authority to demand the resignation of the pastor, or to transact any business whatever. If the call were to read, "to consider general interests of this church and to take such action relating thereto as the church may by vote determine," the meeting could transact almost any business not forbidden by its rules. If such a meeting should demand the resignation of the pastor, such action would be subject, however, to any general rule of the church relating to the tenure of the pastoral office, as for instance, that it could only be terminated on a three months' notice or by a concurrent vote of an ecclesiastical council.

It is not wise for a church to attempt to conceal the object for which a meeting is to be held. The precise matter to be submitted to the church should be stated in the call; otherwise serious question may arise as to the authority of the meeting to act in the premises.

Where special meetings are called, whether by one of the official boards or by a group of members, the call with the signatures of those who have drafted it should be read

from the pulpit on the Sunday previous to the meeting and incorporated into the minutes of the meeting.

Who Presides at Church Meetings? Unless the constitution of the church provides otherwise, the pastor commonly acts as moderator in all business meetings of the church, excepting those which relate to his own salary or work, or which may be called for the consideration of some matter in which he has a personal interest. Some churches provide in their constitutions for an elected moderator other than the pastor. In some states the moderator must be elected annually. In Massachusetts, the circular sent out by the Secretary of State to churches that are planning to incorporate definitely recommends that the moderator be not the pastor of the church.

In churches which have no rule concerning the moderator and in which the pastor presides by right of established custom, the church may at any meeting elect another moderator at its pleasure. In the absence of the pastor, the meeting may be called to order by the senior deacon, or if the business in hand relate particularly to money or property interests, by the chairman of the board of trustees, if the trustees are elected by the church and not by the society.

Should the Pastor Preside? It is manifestly improper that the pastor should preside at a meeting where the subject of his continuance in the pastorate is to be considered, or any matter regarding his relation to the church. Even if he has a legal right as a member to be there, he should never claim it. A minister who stands on his legal rights either has already lost, or is sure to forfeit, his claim under the law of Christ.—*Boynton:* The Congregational Way, p. 72.

Must the Presiding Officer at Church Meetings Be a Member of the Church? Unless the constitution of the church requires it, there is no reason why the presiding officer at a church meeting should invariably be a member of the church. There are times when it is expedient that a church choose some other person to preside at a particular meeting. This may occur while there is a threatened division in the church or in a case where the church finds

itself in need of expert advice. There are many deliberative bodies in which this liberty prevails. The House of Representatives in Congress has thus far uniformly chosen one of its own members as presiding officer, but at different times the possibility of another choice has been considered. There is nothing in the Constitution or Statutes of the United States which would prevent the House of Representatives from choosing as its speaker any person whom it deemed advisable so to elect. It has been truthfully said that the House could choose as its speaker "a foreign princess under age." The church has the same liberty, though ordinarily the moderator will naturally be chosen from the membership.

Who Presides at Annual Meetings? At annual meetings of an incorporated church the custom varies somewhat according to the laws and usages of the different states. In some of the New England states a moderator must be elected. The following statement by Dr. Boynton holds good in some states but not in all:

Moderator at Annual Meetings. At the annual meeting of an incorporated church the moderator must be elected, usually by ballot, and it depends on the church whether it shall be the pastor or not. If some other member will preside better or more impartially, that should decide the choice.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 72.

Has the Pastor the Power of Veto? The pastor, it should not need to be said, has no veto over the action of his church. He has the authority of his office as a presiding officer, and no more. He may not properly use his position to further his own measures in any manner that would be unbecoming in any other presiding officer.

Power of Veto. Increase Mather, in his Disquisition on Ecclesiastical Councils (p. 14) incidentally intimates that the Platform gives the pastor the power of veto in the church of which he is pastor. Eliot, in his "Ecclesiastical History of Massachusetts," says: "After the Platform, some ministers claimed more than it gave them, and some claimed a power to negative the proceedings of the church." Zabdiel Adams, in his "Answer to a Treatise on Church Government," says: "The keys are so lodged with elders and brethren as never to be used but by mutual consent." He maintains that, since ruling elders have ceased, the whole power of the bench of elders rests with the pastor (pp. 76-83). Eliot asserts that in

these matters he took a position which could not be maintained by the Platform, nor any just sentiments of religious freedom.—*Cum-Lechford:* Plain Dealing, in Hist. Soc. Col., Series III, Vol. III, 74.

No Veto Power. Not even an installed pastor may refuse to put a motion when properly made, much less can he refuse to declare the vote or veto church action. He may vacate the chair and resign his pastorate; but should he presume to lord it over the church in any one of these three ways, the church may remove him from the chair by electing another moderator in his stead. The pastor, as moderator, is bound by the ordinary parliamentary rules, except as they are modified by Congregational usages.—*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, p. 191.

Do the Majority Rule? The statement that the majority rule may be accepted as being generally true. This does not, however, imply the right of a majority to ride roughshod over the feelings of the minority. The purpose of the majority vote is to determine the will of God through the judgment of the membership. Where a strong difference of opinion develops, the majority at the particular time of the ballot is not certainly indicative of the will of God. The spirit of truth often finds expression through the protest of the minority. The majority should carefully consider any serious protest on the part of the minority and proceed with Christian deliberation and with brotherly spirit. Questions likely to be divisive should rarely be forced to a vote until there has been patient and loving effort to secure unanimity. The minority may not determine the policy of the church; but when there is earnest protest by a considerable minority, Christian courtesy will ordinarily indicate the wisdom of deferring action until there can be practical unanimity.

Majority. Whatever passes in the church by a majority of the brethren is a church act.—*Isaac Chauncy:* Divine Inst. Cong. Churches, p. 105.

The greater number must always rule, but they are, in certain cases, under moral obligation not to insist on their right; as, for instance, in receiving a new member to the church when a portion seem conscientiously dissatisfied.—*Watts:* Foundation of a Christian Church; Works, iii, p. 240.

Majorities must govern, and minorities ought to rest satisfied, save in cases of conscience, where they should protest.—*Hopkins:* System, ii, 350-350.

The churches govern each by all the members unanimously, or

else by the major part, wherein every one hath equal vote and superspection with their ministers. In Boston, they commonly rule by unanimous consent, if they can; in Salem, by majorities.—*Letchford:* Plain Dealing, in Hist. Soc. Col., Series III, Vol. III, 74.

It is not common to settle questions of great importance by the vote of a bare majority. A greater degree of unanimity is usually sought, and generally obtained.—*Punchard:* View of Congregationalism, p. 170.

Theory and Method. Our theory, however, is unanimity, not majority and minority. We seek the instruction, conviction and unanimous action of the total constituency involved. We labor and wait for this, believing in it, knowing it to be the highest reservoir of power. Our system stands for the utmost absence of unwelcome coercion, though it should be but the carrying away of a small minority by a great majority on a trivial issue. And we believe that what is true and wise ought to be, and at length will be, unanimously accepted. We are, on the other hand, quite accustomed to the power of minorities to hinder or to mar, even to hold the real truth and carry it finally to victory.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, pp. 26-27.

Is Church Business Governed by Parliamentary Rules? Church business is governed by ordinary parliamentary rules, and members should be careful to observe these rules in all business and discussions. This does not mean, however, that such rules should be administered arbitrarily, or that a member who, through lack of technical knowledge, makes a mistake in the mere form of his motion or discussion should be ruled out of order in arbitrary fashion. Methods of securing advantage in the form of a vote, which might be perfectly allowable in a political convention and quite in order from the standpoint of mere parliamentary law, may be highly discourteous in meetings for the transaction of the business of the church. Church business should be transacted in a brotherly spirit. All things should be done decently and in order, with fraternal consideration and without needless technicality.

Common Rules Observed. All matters relating to the affairs of any Christian church, or of the churches assembled together, should be discussed and decided in the simplest and most fraternal way. And yet, in order that progress may be made, and that all may be content with the results, it is necessary that the common rules for conducting business should be observed by all and enforced by the presiding officer.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 202.

Where the Majority Leave the Meeting, Can the Minority Transact Business? The following case will serve as an illustration of what sometimes happens: A pastor had become unpopular with the majority of his members. A meeting was called to consider the advisability of requesting his resignation. Just before the time of the meeting word was whispered round among those present that the minister himself intended to be at the meeting and to take the chair, and there was fear that if he did so his presence and personal influence would defeat the will of the majority. About one hundred members quietly withdrew to a private house and there held a meeting in which they passed a motion demanding the resignation of the minister. Only eleven persons remained in the church building. The constitution provided that thirteen should be necessary for a quorum. These eleven sent out and with some difficulty secured two other members to come and attend their meeting. This meeting requested the minister to remain as pastor of the church. Which was the real meeting of the church?

The thirteen members constituted the meeting of the church. Any majority of a hundred who would withdraw for fear of a minister who had a pitiful handful of eleven members at his back would richly deserve to be ruled by the minority. Whether it would be wise for the minister to remain as pastor of a church in the face of such strong opposition is another question. The one hundred members who withdrew forfeited their right to determine the question of the pastorate. If they feared the minister would preside, it was easily within their power to remove him from the chair. Any member could have risen, and some member should have risen, and nominated another person as moderator. The pastor not only should not have presided, but, after making his personal statement, should have withdrawn from the room.

Where the Majority Leave the Church, Which Is the Church? Where a majority of the members demand their

letters and withdraw from the church, they have a right to form another church, but they cannot rule the church which they have left, or claim to be the church; nor can they return and participate in its deliberations.

In one case, a majority of the members being opposed to the minister demanded their letters and the letters were granted. These letters, however, were not presented to any other church and at the time of the next annual meeting these dismissed members returned, and, being a majority present at the meeting, insisted upon their right to vote. They had no such right. Church members who attempt to govern the church by leaving it must abide by the results of that decision. If they fail to drive out a minister by that not very courteous or courageous method and do not succeed in forcing his resignation, they must permit the church to govern itself, for those who remain constitute the church even though they are a minority of its previous membership.

What Rules Govern Annual Meetings of the Church? The constitution or rules of a church should provide a time and order of business for its annual meeting. In many churches this meeting is held near the end of December or early in January. This has the advantage of making the church fiscal year coincident with the calendar year. It has the serious disadvantage of dividing the year of church activity in the middle. As the custom of summer vacations grows, the church year becomes more and more the period from autumn to summer. Some churches meet this difficulty by holding their annual meeting early in the autumn and their meeting for final reports in the early part of January. This enables the officers to plan for the season of work without uncertainty as to their tenure of office, and it also enables the church to close its books and account for its moneys at the end of the calendar year, and tends to unite the churches in a common fiscal year.

The business of the church meeting usually includes the election of officers, the hearing of reports, and the summing

up of the work of the year. It is customary to elect the clerk and treasurer for a single year, but deacons and trustees are usually elected in terms so that only one-half and frequently less than one-half of these officers are chosen annually. This method provides for occasional changes in the governing boards of the church and also for a degree of continuity in their management.

What Business Should Be Recorded? The essential items to be entered upon the records in regard to any particular meeting are: first, the time and place of meeting, with a copy of the call, if a special call has been issued; secondly, the devotional service with which a meeting is opened; thirdly, the name of the moderator; fourthly, the reading of past records and a statement of their approval by the church; fifthly, the business transacted, including reports of committees, unfinished business, and new business, and the incorporation of the full text of all resolutions or motions passed by the church; sixthly, a record of the time to which the meeting adjourns, if it adjourns to a given time; seventhly, the vote of adjournment; eighthly, the signature of the clerk.

Unless the church by vote instructs otherwise, it is not necessary for the clerk to record motions that are made and not carried. Unless there is a yea and nay vote, the names of persons favoring or opposing a motion should not be recorded. It is not necessary, and it is not generally expedient, to record the names of persons making or reading motions, but when formal resolutions are adopted the name of the member or committee or board presenting them should be recorded.

All motions should be written excepting those that are of so simple a character that the clerk can have no difficulty in understanding and recording them.

Who Has a Right to the Church Records? The records of the church pertaining to finances are in the custody of the treasurer, who should report statedly to the church, and his reports should be incorporated into the records of

the church. All other records relating to the life of the church itself and not to any of its departments having its own recording officer are in the custody of the clerk. The clerk, the treasurer, and all other officers hold their respective records, subject to the authority of the church. Church clerks have been known unduly to magnify their office and to suppose that they had authority to refuse the pastor, deacons, or trustees the privilege of referring to the records. Church treasurers also, and with even more of peril to the welfare of the church, have sometimes assumed that the records of their financial transactions were subject to no supervision. Any officer of the church has a right to access to the records for any reasonable purpose, and the church may vote at any time requiring the clerk or treasurer to produce the records. This does not mean, however, that the clerk must loan the church books to all comers; on the contrary, he is responsible for the safekeeping of the church books. In an incorporated church any member has a legal right to examine the church records, under proper conditions. Persons demanding access to them should examine them at a suitable time and in a proper place, so that they may be guarded from loss or mutilation.

May Church Officers Obliterate Church Records? Church officers have no authority to obliterate church records. If an action of the church is to be expunged from the records, it must be done by vote of the church and not by the act of any officers.

What Should Be Done with Reports? Reports of committees should not become a part of the records of meetings excepting in important matters where the church by vote desires to include the whole report as part of its proceedings. Where a report includes resolutions, the resolutions should become a part of the record of the meeting. Reports should be kept on file indefinitely unless the church votes to destroy. A safe place should be provided for old records

and reports. Frequently these grow valuable in after years and are important sources of local history.

How Are Votes Taken in Church Meetings? Ordinarily votes in church meetings are taken viva voce, or by show of hands. Apparently in the early church voting was by the uplifted hand. Where there is likely to be no difference of opinion, the simplest and easiest way of voting is viva voce. If the discussion indicates that there may be some differences of opinion, a show of hands is desirable. If the vote is close, the voters may be called upon to rise. If a vote has been ordered by acclamation, or by show of hands, and the moderator is in doubt, he may call for a rising vote before he declares whether the vote prevails or not.

Are Proxy Votes Permitted? The question whether a vote by proxy is permissible in a Congregational church depends in part upon the laws of the state in which a church is incorporated and the laws of corporations permitting a proxy. If it is admissible it must be in strictly legal form, usually witnessed and sometimes before a notary. In general, it may be said that the system of governing churches by proxy votes is not good Congregationalism. The story freely told among lawyers, of the jury which was proceeding with eleven men, one member having gone away on business but having left his verdict with the foreman in advance, is an illustration of the point. A deliberative assembly, and especially a church assembly, is for the purpose of discussion, conference and a final decision in the light of all the combined wisdom of those present and voting. A proxy vote is an opinion registered before the voter has heard what the Holy Spirit may have to say through other minds than his own. No one Christian knows the whole mind of God on any question of church policy. It is, therefore, undesirable that questions be determined by people who are so sure of their own opinion that they do not attend a meeting at which they may also hear the opinions of others. Due notice of a proposed action having been given and the rules of the church complied

with, questions within the church should be decided by the qualified members present and voting.

Is Irregular Action Invalid? Frequent question arises concerning the validity of action in cases of irregularity in church meetings. If action is taken without a quorum, or if the moderator puts only one side of the question, or if there has been a clear violation of some provision of the constitution, is the action valid or not?

In any such case it is certainly irregular; but not every irregular action is invalid. If, for instance, the meeting lacked a quorum, but had been regularly called, and the question of a quorum was not raised at the time, and the minutes were later approved by the church, it would do little good to raise the issue a year later that a quorum was not present. At a meeting regularly called, a quorum is presumed to be present unless there is call for a quorum. If the moderator says "All who are in favor, say Aye; the motion is carried" and no one at the time objects to the fact that he did not put the negative to vote, and the record is made and approved, it will be difficult, if not wrong and impossible, to invalidate the action later, except by beginning anew, and considering the matter under a fresh motion.

There are many actions which are irregular but not therefore invalid. Daniel Webster is said never to have been admitted to plead before the Supreme Court of the United States. It is said that the first time he came to plead a case the clerk rather thought he had already been admitted and was too much in awe of Webster to ask him, and after that no one felt like challenging him. It would be hard to reverse any decision of the Supreme Court at this day in one of the cases in which Daniel Webster was employed on the ground that he had no legal right to practice in the Supreme Court of the United States. His appearance there was irregular, but not invalid.

Many men have been ordained to the ministry in our own and in other communions in whose ordination there

were irregularities. Some irregularities are in their nature a sufficient ground for refusing to grant to these men ministerial standing. But not every irregularity is in its nature of such character as to disqualify a minister. There is a distinction between irregularity and invalidity.

May a Church Hold Secret Meetings? A church may and sometimes should hold meetings from which the public is excluded. If a church is dealing with a delicate matter of discipline it has a right to insist that reporters be not admitted. One faction of a church may not, however, hold meetings without public notice for the purpose of excluding another faction. If such meetings are held, they have only the status of caucuses.

Must Every Member of a Church Be Informed of Every Meeting? The methods of informing members of special meetings are provided in local church rules. It is assumed that members either attend regular Sunday church services, or will inform themselves of important announcements made in their absence. Usually announcement from the pulpit is a sufficient notice. But it is well to give additional notice, either through a repeated announcement, or through the press, or by mail, of any meeting of extraordinary importance.

Should Church Business Be Regarded as Confidential? The ordinary business of the church is public property and should be transacted openly and with no attempt at concealment; but when the church is dealing with matters affecting the reputation of any of its members, each member of the church should regard the affair as a family matter. The church is in no sense a secret society. Its members are bound by no oath to conceal any part of the business which it transacts, but the members are bound by the laws of Christian brotherhood and courtesy to seek the edification, purity, and peace of the church, and the welfare of its separate members.

May the Church Eject an Intruder? If a church calls a meeting of its members and other persons are present, the

moderator may invite them courteously to withdraw. Should they refuse to do so, they may be required to leave the room. Force is legally permissible if the intruders persist in their refusal to withdraw; but there is usually a more excellent way.

May a Church Silence a Disturber? A church may silence a disturber of its meetings whether those meetings are held for business or worship. A person who discusses a motion must discuss it according to the rules of the church and parliamentary usage. A person who attends a religious service must treat that service with respect. If he fails to do so, he may be asked to withdraw, and if he refuses he may be forcibly ejected.

Who May Expel a Disturber? The moderator of the meeting or the minister in charge of the religious service has authority to call upon an officer of the law, if one is present, to eject a disturber, or he may himself eject him, or call upon his church officers or ushers or other persons present to do so. Such persons should avoid the use of unnecessary force, but if the disturber suffers somewhat through the employment of force which he has brought upon himself, he cannot recover damages from the officer who ordered his removal.

Right of an Assembly to Eject Any One from Its Place of Meeting. Every deliberative assembly has the right to decide who may be present during its session; and when the assembly, either by a rule or by a vote, decides that a certain person shall not remain in the room, it is the duty of the chairman to enforce the rule of order, using whatever force is necessary to eject the party. The chairman can detail members to remove the person, without calling upon the police. If, however, in enforcing the order, any one uses harsher measures than is necessary to remove the person, the courts have held that he, and he alone, is liable for damages, just the same as a policeman would be under similar circumstances. However badly the man may be abused while being removed from the room, neither the chairman nor the society is liable for damages, as, in ordering his removal, they did not exceed their legal rights.—*Robert:* Rules of Order, 1915, pp. 299-300.

May Women Vote in the Business Affairs of the Church? Unless they are forbidden by the constitution of the church to vote, women are permitted to vote on equal

terms with men in Congregational churches. Dr. Dexter strongly contended against the wisdom of this provision, but the exercise of equal suffrage in Congregational churches is practically universal.

May Minors Vote in Congregational Churches? It is customary for churches to fix an age below which members of the church are not permitted to vote. This age ordinarily is 18, though sometimes churches permit members of 16 to vote. In any vote involving the sale of property, change of creed or other matters that might involve important legal or ecclesiastical dispute, if there is any division of sentiment in the church, the rule concerning minor members should be strictly enforced, and if there be no rule, members under the age of 21 should not vote in any such matters where their right to vote is challenged. In some states the statutes provide that members voting must be of legal age.

May One Person Cast the Ballot of the Church? Frequently, where the constitution provides for a vote by ballot and there is no difference of opinion, a motion is made that the clerk cast a single ballot in favor of the resolution, or for the nominee. This motion is illegal, and should not be permitted, excepting where there is absolutely unanimous consent. If one member objects to a motion of this character, the motion is out of order and the ballot must be had; nor should such a member be looked upon as a disturber. Where the ballot is cast in this way, the record should read the same as if ballots had been distributed and a unanimous ballot cast in favor of the candidate elected. It is the privilege of any member of the church to object to such a motion. While the custom of authorizing one person to cast the ballot sometimes saves the time of a meeting, it defeats the intent of the ballot and is a custom more honored in the breach than in the observance.

Have Absent Members the Right to Vote? The right to vote belongs only to active members of the church. Members who have long been absent and whose names are

on the absent list have not the right to return for the mere purpose of voting at a meeting in which they have personal interest. Members residing in the community and failing to attend for a considerable length of time should be governed by the rule of the local church in such matters, but if there be no rule and their names have not been placed upon an absent list they have a right to vote.

IX. DUTIES AND RIGHTS OF CHURCH MEMBERS

What Is a Church Member? A Congregational church member is a person who, having confessed his faith in Christ, has been received, on his own application and by vote of the church, into the local body of Christians with whom he chooses and by whom he is chosen to be associated. In such a company of brethren in fellowship in the spirit of Jesus Christ, all adult members have equal privileges.

Composed of Visible Members. And as to the gospel Church, it is plain that it was composed of none but visible saints. No other but baptized persons were admitted to communion; and no adult persons but such as professed repentance and faith were admitted to baptism, which shows that they were visible saints. Of such materials was the church of Corinth composed; for the apostle speaks to them as saints by profession.—*Emmons:* Platform Eccl. Govt., i.

Regenerate Membership. The visible Church of Christ should be composed only of such persons as give credible evidence of having in a godly way repented of their sins, believed unto salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ as their divine Saviour, and begun a life of allegiance to him as their King. The conviction that upon this principle alone can the constitution of the Church be duly and safely placed was distinctive, in their time, with the founders of our church order.—*Ladd:* Polity, p. 187.

Admission into the church-kingdom requires a new birth, repentance, faith, righteousness. These are made conditions of admission into the visible churches. On the day of Pentecost, when the Christian Church was recognized and inaugurated, repentance was required, and acceptance of the Gospel.—*Ross:* Church Kingdom, p. 105.

A Congregational church should consist of such persons and such only as give evidence that they have given themselves to trust and follow the Lord Jesus Christ and have been renewed by the Holy Spirit, who have confessed him as their Saviour and Lord and have covenanted to worship God and work together for the advancement of his kingdom in a church organized upon Congregational principles.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 74.

Five Points. (1) Those constituting a Christian church must be believers, true followers of Jesus Christ; (2) they must live near enough together to meet statedly for worship, business, and labor; (3) there must be some recognition of one another as Christians, with the proper tests in life, belief, and discipline; (4) there must be some agreement to observe the ordinances of Christ together. This agreement is a covenant, whether written or understood, and

constitutes the body a church; and (5) they must become one society; that is, one body, under the same officers, with one record, and doing as an organized unit whatever it does, in worship, business, and evangelization. Any such organization is a church of Jesus Christ, named after the place where it exists.—*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, pp. 170-171.

What Is the Basis of Church Membership? The basis of church membership in a Congregational church should be credible evidence of Christian character, confession of Jesus as Savior and Lord, and the acceptance of a covenant to walk with the members of the church in Christian love according to its rules until regularly dismissed therefrom.

The Individual Member. The social culture and social well-being of each local church are primarily dependent upon the character of the individual members of which that church is composed. The followers of Christ do, indeed, fight in companies and in line of battle; but their success in warfare depends, nevertheless, upon the characteristics of the individual soldier.—*Ladd:* Principles of Church Polity, p. 99.

"The Saint's Apology." The matter of this is a company of saints of whom . . . the church that admits them ought to judge of every one of them, that Christ has begun a good work in them, and will finish it.—Apology, xviii.

The Low Country Exiles. Christ hath given power to receive in or cut off any member to the whole body together, in any Christion congregation.—Confession xxiv, in Hansford, i, 95.

A church has no more right to debar those who refuse to relate their Christian experience, than to require oaths and subscriptions and conformity to a thousand more ceremonies.—The Gospel Order Revived.

Christian Fellowship. Now how marvelous a thing is it, and lamentable withal, that amongst Christians, any should be found so far at odds with Christian holiness as to think that others than apparently holy, at the least, deserved admittance into the fellowship of Christ's Church, and therewith of Christ! Do, or can, the gracious promises of God made to the Church, the heavenly blessings due to the Church, the seals of divine grace given to the Church, appertain to others than such?

Both the Scriptures and common reason teach that whomsoever the Lord doth call, and use to and in any special work or employment, he doth in a special manner separate and sanctify them thereunto. And so the Church, being to be employed in the special service of God, to the glory of his special love, and mercy in their happiness, and to show forth his virtues, must be of such persons, as, by and in whom, he will, and may thus be worshiped and glorified.—*John Robinson:* Works, iii, pp. 66, 127.

May a Church Determine Its Own Terms of Member-

ship? Every voluntary organization has the indisputable right to determine the terms and conditions of its own membership in its own body. In so far as a local church is such a voluntary organization, it has this right. But a local church is part of the whole Church of Christ, and has no right to set itself above the Church, nor to call that common which God hath cleansed. There can be no greater heresy than that which makes a local church a mere club with a right to receive or reject members on arbitrary conditions of its own manufacture. A person who is a true member of the invisible Church of Christ ought to find a home in the visible Church.

The theory that a church is a voluntary organization with right to make its own conditions of membership, was earnestly advocated by Dr. Nathaniel Emmons, who said:

> The members of a local church are competent judges to determine who are worthy or unworthy to be admitted. It would be very irrational to suppose that any particular church is obliged to admit every one that offers to join their holy communion. They have an undoubted right to judge of the qualifications of proponents, and receive or reject them, according to an impartial judgment of Christian charity. This right they never ought to give up.—Platform Eccl. Govt., iii, 1.

Dr. Leonard W. Bacon vehemently protested against this theory, and counted the churches formed on this model as virtual seceders from historic Congregationalism:

> **Church vs. Club.** A church, according to this "platform," is a club the members of which are bound to such mutual duties as they may have agreed upon. It is "essential" to the club, as "to every voluntary society, to admit whom they please into their number," and to rule out or blackball whom they please. This is the working basis on which the organization of the seceding churches of Eastern Massachusetts proceeded; and the principle which it illustrated, though not adopted in articulate form, proceeding, nevertheless, from so influential a center as Boston, has had a wide and pernicious vogue in American church history. Secondly, there was the come-outerism commended by Dr. Emmons as a "Scriptural Platform of Ecclesiastical Government," the "scripture" of which was most distinctly written in the Contrat Social of Jean Jacques Rousseau. It involved an unlimited "right of secession," and the right of the seceders to organize on an exclusive basis, keeping out such of their fellow-Christians as were uncongenial to them. This was the ideal under which the seceding Orthodox churches of Eastern Massachusetts had been organized

into a wonderfully effective and aggressive dissenting sect. From this influential center it widely affected the Congregationalism of the whole country. Not only did the use of imposed and prescribed doctrinal tests (so abhorrent to the Fathers) come into general use; but the new churches were distinctly labeled "Trinitarian" or "Calvinistic"; and it came to be considered quite laudable, by stipulations in the covenant, to erect churches on an anti-slavery, or a total-abstinence, or a prohibitionist basis. The former method gave rise to Congregational churches, sometimes not ostensibly bearing that denomination, and uniting in one fellowship such various elements as go to make up the Christian population of a new settlement. The latter constituted churches of Congregationalists, in which each member was presumed to prefer a certain polity and type of dogma and usage of worship.—*Bacon:* Congregationalists, pp. 188, 189, 223, 224.

Dr. Ladd replied to Upham, whose "Ratio Discipline" (p. 57) upheld the Emmons theory, as follows:

Terms of Membership. No Christian church has any authority to constitute the terms of its own membership as a mere matter of natural or social right. Jesus Christ has constituted the terms of membership in churches called by his name; He has done this in the primal institution of his holy catholic Church. He has confirmed the law of this constitution by the practice of the apostolic churches. I must confess that it seems to me little better than a mild form of constructive treason to attempt changes in this constitution which the Lord has given to his Church. The methods by which the particular visible church arrives at judgment upon the credible proofs of true discipleship may indeed be adapted to the exigencies of the cases involved: the judgment of the church as to what constitute themselves credible proofs may indeed greatly change. But to maintain that a particular visible church may make requisitions upon men who would come into its communion, which are not involved in the New Testament requisitions, is a heresy under the formal principle of the true church polity.—Polity, p. 201.

Many other Congregational authorities may be quoted to the same effect. The church is not a club, organized for the selfish ends of its membership, and entitled to reject whom it will. It is the Body of Christ, and to it belongs every true Christian who desires its fellowship.

John Davenport's Theory. Though some are at present weak in faith, yet, if we may conceive that the Lord hath received them, the church must receive them.—Power of Congregational Churches, p. 42.

Stillingfleet's View. What charter hath Christ given the church to bind men up to, more than himself hath done? or to exclude those from her society who may be admitted into heaven?—Terms of Communion, Preface.

Bishop Taylor's Affirmation. Particular churches are bound to allow communion to all those that profess the same faith upon which the apostles did give communion.—Letter to John Goodwin.

Robert Hall's Opinion. No man or set of men are entitled to prescribe as an indispensable condition of communion what the New Testament has not enjoined as a condition of salvation. It is presumptuous to aspire to greater purity and strictness in selecting the materials of a church than are observed by its divine Founder.—Works, Vol. IV, p. 653.

How Is Membership in the Church Secured? A person applying for membership in a local church should first appear before the church itself, or before its board of deacons, or advisory committee, or other body designated by the church, and after suitable examination if found to be worthy of membership should be approved by the examining body, and, if that body be other than the church, recommended by that body to the church. In some of the older churches examination for membership was before the whole church. This commonly is not wise and is distinctly exceptional in Congregational usage. The member, having been approved by the examining committee, should be propounded from the pulpit for admission to the church, and accepted into membership by vote of the church. Usually the public reception is at a later meeting.

In the absence of some specific rule, the following will serve as an orderly method:

(1) The person to be received into membership confers with the pastor, who advises the applicant and encourages him to meet the church committee at a special time. The pastor should be faithful in inquiring whether the applicant is truly seeking to serve the Lord and gives evidence of a regenerated life. In all this he will be careful not to break the bruised reed or to set arbitrary or unreasonable tests. He will learn carefully to discriminate in determining what is reasonable to expect of childhood and of those of mature years in the acceptance of Christ and in membership in the church. If a person seems to him unqualified for present church membership, he will not rudely repel him or discourage him, but will seek most

earnestly to encourage him and by added instruction and prayer will endeavor to bring him later into fuller knowledge and acceptance of the Christian life, and so into the fellowship of the church.

(2) The applicant appears before the examining committee. Sometimes applications are made in writing.

It has often served to simplify the process of applying for church membership and to emphasize the essential things of the Christian life if the applicant signs in advance an application like the following, which may be printed upon a card:

"Believing in the love of God our Father, and in the revelation of that love in Jesus Christ, we confess Him as our Lord; and, living together in the fellowship and service of the Spirit of God, will strive to know our duty as taught in the Scriptures, and to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us; and, with loyalty to God, faith in Christ, and love for all mankind, will labor for righteousness which is profitable for the life that now is and has promise for the life everlasting."

I heartily accept the confession and covenant above, and wish to unite with the church at the next communion.

Name .....

Address .....

A card containing the brief confession of faith of the National Council has been employed similarly, and with good results.

The committee will not fail to use great tact and Christian sympathy as well as conscientious thoroughness in its examinations. It will not consider it any part of its duty needlessly to emphasize the religious duties or faults of the applicant further than to satisfy itself of the real earnestness and sincere Christian purpose of the person applying.

(3) The names of the persons who have been approved for church membership should be read from the pulpit by the pastor, at least one Sunday before that on which they are to be received.

(4) The names that have been propounded are taken up usually at the preparatory service, though there is no

valid reason why this should be the only time, and voted upon by the whole membership of the church present. It is in order for any member of the church to ask that the names be voted upon singly, and any five members may require a ballot, but unless there is a demand for a vote upon the names singly the full list may be voted upon viva voce.

(5) On the following Sunday and usually just before the administration of the Lord's Supper, the persons who have been accepted for membership in the church come forward as their names are called, and assent to the covenant of the church, and receive the right hand of fellowship from the pastor. In some cases they are required to sign the covenant of the church, but this is not commonly enjoined.

What Is the Propounding of Members? Persons who have been examined by the proper committee are publicly propounded from the pulpit a week or more before the time at which the vote is to be taken. This insures to the church proper protection, by enabling any member to object if the candidate is not suitable for membership.

Propounding Candidates. The candidate's name is announced to the congregation, two weeks, or more, before the date of intended admission, so that if any person has complaint to make, affecting his Christian character, there may be seasonable opportunity to lay it before the church. No such objection being made, the final question of his admission comes before the church, usually at the close of the next preparatory lecture, when a majority vote will admit him—which vote is, however, usually unanimous, because if any member has any good ground of objection, it has been mentioned, and had its due weight beforehand.—*Dexter:* Congregationalism, p. 183.

May a Church Examine a Member Who Unites by Letter? A church may examine a member who proposes to unite by letter, but unless there is some reason for suspicion, such examination is usually brief, and often is chiefly valuable as affording a proposed member and the church officers an opportunity of acquaintance with a view to Christian fellowship.

Members Received by Letter. Richard Mather affirms that

members uniting by letter should be examined; "for the former church may have erred in receiving them."—Ch. Gov. and Church Covenant, p. 30. Hooker (Survey, part iii, 7) says they may be received without it, if their praise is in all the churches; or the church may examine, and, if they are scandalous, should reject them. Winthrop shows that Cotton was thus examined when he was received to the church in Boston.—Journal, i, p. 110. Mitchell declares the right to examine, but says that it is not generally practised.—Christ. Doc., ii, pp. 202, 203. Milton says the covenant should be repeated, unless the church have ample testimonials from some other orthodox church.—*Cummings:* Cong. Dict., Art., Members.

What Constitutes Examination for Membership? There is no inflexible rule as to what shall constitute examination for church membership. The church is entitled to satisfy itself, either by direct examination or by the recommendation of its appointed officers, of the fitness of a candidate for church membership. It will often occur that a committee will require little assurance beyond the testimony of the pastor. The only rules are those of good sense and Christian courtesy.

Private Examination. In case any through excessive fear, or other infirmity, be unable to make their personal relation of their spiritual estate in public, it is sufficient that the elders, having received private satisfaction, make relation thereof in public before the church, they testifying their assents thereunto; this being the way that tendeth most to edification. But where persons are of greater abilities, there it is most expedient that they make their relations and confessions personally with their own mouth, as David professeth of himself.—Cambridge Platform, xii, 4.

May a Church Receive a Member Without a Letter? It will sometimes occur that a person will propose to unite with a Congregational church from a denomination which refuses to grant letters except to churches of its own communion or to a restricted fellowship. In such a case, there should first be a courteous request for a letter. If this is refused, the church of which he is a member should be requested to terminate his membership with a view to his uniting with another church. If after this there is still refusal, he will be justified in uniting without a letter, and the church will be justified in receiving him. Notice should be sent to the former church, that it may adjust its relations

to him in such manner as its sense of propriety shall determine.

Transfer of Church Membership. Increase Mather affirms that dismission and recommendation are scriptural and reasonable, and that "a church ought not to receive a member from another church, without endeavors of mutual satisfaction of the churches concerned."—Vindication, pp. 109, 113. Chauncy says: If, upon the use of all due means, the church will grant no dismission, the member refused may join another church.—Divine Inst. Cong. Ch., p. 121. Cotton Mather lays down a rule for a case which he says "perhaps never happened," in which a church refuse to receive a member where a council advise to it, viz., that he be received to some other church in the neighborhood.—Ratio Disciplinæ, p. 161. Cleveland, in his "Narrative of the Conduct of the Fourth Church of Ipswich," quotes from "Watts's Foundation of a Christian Church": "If particular persons cannot agree with the major part, they may withdraw, if the church refuse to dismiss them; for Christian churches must have all voluntary members, and are not to be turned into prisons."—*Cummings:* Cong. Dict.

What Constitutes Christian Faith? Christian faith consists in an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. It is not to be confused with an opinion about Him. Faith is an attitude of the heart and will; not a judgment of the intellect.

From Cambridge Platform. The weakest measure of faith is to be accepted in those that desire to be admitted into the church, because weak Christians, if sincere, have the substance of that faith, repentance and holiness which is required in church members; and such have most need of the ordinances for their confirmation and growth in grace. The Lord Jesus would not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed, but gather the tender lambs in his arms and carry them gently in his bosom. Such charity and tenderness is to be used, as the weakest Christian, if sincere, may not be excluded nor discouraged. Severity of examination is to be avoided.—xii, 3.

Do Members from Other Churches Assent to the Covenant? All members, however received, assent to the covenant of the church. The form of admission of members commonly makes a distinction between those confessing Christ for the first time and those who have previously confessed Him and now are renewing their covenant, but in every case the covenant should be assented to by all new members.

May Members Be Received in Their Absence? Mem-

bers who are unable to be present in person may be received by special vote of the church. In the case of a mere temporary illness, the rule should not be set aside, but the member should be publicly received at the next communion season which he is able to attend. In the case of a person unable to be present at the communion service, the church may by vote receive the member at any other public service, or at the church prayer meeting. In case of an invalid unable to attend any of the services of the church, or in any emergency which in the mind of the church justifies such action, the pastor and deacons may be authorized by the church to receive the member into fellowship in the name of the church. Such a provision should be made in the rules of every church. In almost every community will be found some invalid who ought to become a member of the church, the circumstances of whose case must indicate the method appropriate for his or her reception. This provision, however, should not be permitted to apply to people who through foolish self-consciousness or reluctance to make public confession wish to enter into the sheep-fold by some other way than the door.

May a Church Refuse to Accept a Letter? If a church is offered a letter by a person whom it has reason to believe unworthy, it may refuse to receive the candidate.

Richard Mather declared that those emigrants who were known to be godly are all admitted to some church on their own desire, unless they have given offense by their walk: in this case, they must give evidence of repentance.—Ch. Gov. and Ch. Cov., viii. Hooker held that if two or three witnesses show a recommended member to be scandalous, he should be rejected.—Survey, part i, 241.

What Are the Duties of a Member of the Church? It is the duty of every member of the church first of all to be faithful to the personal spiritual duties which are essential to the Christian life and to honor his profession by faithful living. It is his duty to make his own personal sanctification and his Christian usefulness the test by which to decide the character of his worldly business and his amuse-

ments, abstaining from every choice and act which can impair his testimony as a Christian, and earnestly seeking by prayer, by daily word and deed, and by all that makes up the sum of his influence among men, to lead a life worthy of a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is his further duty to attend habitually the services of the church of which he is a member, to give regularly for its support and its charities according to his ability, to share in such forms of its organized work as he is able to assist, and to labor for its purity, its peace, and its prosperity. It is his duty to refrain from needless criticism of the church, its services, its ministry, and his fellow-members; to be guided in his speech and thought by the dictates of Christian love; to seek honestly and lovingly to promote the spirit of Christianity in his own heart and the hearts of all members of the church. It is his duty to remain in the church until he is regularly dismissed therefrom. If the time comes for him to unite with another church, he should on no account consider himself at liberty to take such a step until he has been dismissed in orderly fashion from the church of which he is a member.

What Are the Rights of Church Members? Each member of a Congregational church has an equal right with all others to share in its public worship, to participate in its meetings for conference and prayer, to discuss proposed measures and changes in accordance with the rules of the church, to vote in the transaction of its business, and to participate in the election of its officers. All these rights he holds subject to the equal right of all his fellow members. Each adult member is eligible to any office in the church, the church having full authority to constitute one of its own members a trustee, a deacon or even a minister. The minister of the church, whether originally elected from its membership or called from another church to become its minister, should be a member of the church, received as other members are received, and his rights as such a

member are rights in all essentials identical with those of his fellow members.

Congregational churches hold to the right of private judgment. Each member in the church is sole custodian of his own conscience. He has the right to interpret the Scriptures, and to determine his own conduct in the light of that interpretation so long as his conduct does not infringe upon the rights of others or disturb the peace or impugn the good name of the church. He has a right to interpret the creed of the church broadly, as it is a purely human document, the product of human judgment. He has no right to treat it with contempt or assume that his judgment of it is superior to that of the men who made it and of those who accept it, but he has a right to interpret it liberally. It is not essential to Christian fellowship that all members of the church should think alike, or that the creed should be held in such complete uniformity of interpretation as to fetter the conscience of its members. If a member of the church finds himself no longer able to assent to the creed of the church in the hard and fast meaning of its words, he is not on that account to be deprived of his rights as a member, so long as he holds his differences of opinion in the spirit of Christian charity; nor need such a member hastily assume that he has no further right to be a member of the church, or that it is his inherent duty to leave it. He has the right to endeavor to induce the church to change its creed. If he fails in his endeavor he still has a right to consider whether his own change of faith is of such a character that he can no longer work and worship with the members in the spirit of Christian brotherhood. In considering the question whether it is his duty to withdraw from the church he should consult the covenant rather than the creed, and determine whether he is in essential harmony with its intent and spirit. If he elects to remain in the membership of the church, his brethren should not call that unclean or common which God hath cleansed. He on his part should remember that he has promised to seek

the edification, purity, and peace of the church, and should hold his differences of opinion in a spirit of Christian love.

What Is Good and Regular Standing? A member is in good and regular standing in a church so long as no charges are preferred against him. The term does not imply that he is perfect. Every member is presumed to be in good and regular standing until proved guilty of a misdemeanor. He cannot demand dismission with a certificate of his good and regular standing if any charge is pending against him; but even while awaiting his trial he is presumed to be worthy of confidence, and may not be adjudged guilty until so proved.

Good Standing of Church Members. A member is in good standing until the church by vote, after due notice and hearing, has deprived him of the privileges of membership, and upon his application is entitled to a letter of dismission and recommendation in the regular form.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 75.

How Are Members Dismissed? Members are dismissed to some other church by letter, granted by order of the church, on the request of the member.

Dismission of Church Members. It is therefore the duty of church members, in such times and places where counsel may be had, to consult with the church whereof they are members about their removal, that accordingly they having their approbation, may be encouraged, or otherwise desist. They who are joined with consent, should not depart without consent, except forced thereunto.—Cambridge Platform, xiii, 2.

When members remove their residence to the nearer neighborhood of a sister church, or when, for any good reason, it seems to them expedient to transfer their regular attendance to the ministrations and worship of a sister church, they ought to ask, and the church ought to grant them, letters of dismission and recommendation. It is well that this request should be in writing.—*Dexter:* Congregationalism, p. 185.

Forms of letters for use of churches in dismissing members may be found in the author's manual.

To Whom May Church Letters Be Granted? Any member of a church, in good and regular standing, desiring by reason of removal or any other good reason to unite with another church, may be dismissed by letter addressed to the church which he desires to join, and on the acceptance of said letter by the church addressed, his membership

ceases. It is customary to limit church letters to a period of six months, and in no case are they valid for more than a year. A church being offered a letter after the expiration of the time limit may at its discretion waive this condition.

May a Church Member Terminate His Membership at Pleasure? Membership in a church is voluntary, and a church cannot permanently hold in its fellowship one who ceases to desire membership in it, but membership in a church is accepted in accordance with a definite covenant which must scrupulously be regarded in the termination of membership. The covenant is mutual; and a member does not cease to be a member by the mere serving of notice of his intention to withdraw, nor by uniting with another church without asking for a letter. He remains a member until regularly dismissed according to the rules and covenant of the church.

What Shall a Church Do When a Member Unites with Another Church Without Taking His Letter? In such a case the church should remove the name from its roll with a note to the effect that he had already joined another church. Such acts are often committed thoughtlessly, but in some cases are the result of a discourtesy which cannot be called Christian in its spirit.

Termination of Membership Without Permission. Isaac Chauncey said: A member may not depart to non-communion, or to the communion of another church, without the leave of the church of which he is a member. Such a deserter is a *felo de se*, and doth disfranchise and excommunicate himself.—Divine Inst. Cong. Chs., 116, 117. See Upham's Rat. Dis., 147; Punchard's View, 173.

May a Member Demit His Membership? A member of a Congregational church, against whose moral character there is no charge, who requests to be released from its membership for reasons which the church after careful conference with him may deem satisfactory—such as change in doctrinal views—may be released from membership at his own request. This was not the custom of the early Congregational churches, but has approved itself to our

usage, and there are cases in which it appears to be the only just and wise way. In every such case, however, the church should first labor affectionately with the member and seek by Christian courtesy and brotherly interest to win him back again.

Termination of Membership. If a member desires to join a religious body with which the church of which he is a member is not in fellowship, or which would not receive its letter, the church may, at his request, give him a certificate of his good standing and terminate his membership.

If a member, against whose moral character there is no charge, requests to be released from his covenant obligations to the church, for reasons which the church may finally deem satisfactory, after it shall have patiently and kindly endeavored to secure his continuance in its fellowship, such request may be granted and his membership terminated. In these two cases this is the usage in the best churches today, though it was not that of the fathers.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 77.

When May a Church Refuse to Grant a Letter? A church may refuse a letter to a member who is under discipline or to one who is concerned in a recent scandal or misdemeanor and who applies for a letter to protect himself from discipline. If a member ought to be expelled from the church and attempts to escape expulsion by requesting a letter, the church should protect its own good name and protect other churches to whom the letter might be presented by refusing the request and summoning him to answer to the charge against him. If his offense is of long standing and well known, and the church has ignored it until he applies for a letter, but has permitted him to remain in good and regular standing even though he has been negligent and unfaithful to his duty, the church may not then refuse him a letter. It may refuse such letter, however, if the reason for its delay has been its charitable desire to bring him to an acknowledgement of his sin, and if that effort has failed to secure his repentance.

Are General Letters to Be Granted? It is not orderly for a Congregational church to grant a letter addressed "To any church." The letter should be addressed to a particular

church and notice should be sent to the pastor or clerk that the member has thus been dismissed to it.

Dismissing Members to No Church. Nor can a church dismiss a member to "any church with which the Providence of God may cast his lot," or to no church. To do the former would be to put out of its own hands the question of its fellowship, and entrust to a single member the ability to compel it into practical fraternity with error from which it might shrink with dismay. To do the latter would be to pass an *ex post facto* law attempting to annul a covenant to which the church is one party, the member another, and the Great Head of the Church the chief.—*Dexter:* Handbook, p. 103.

May There Be Dismission to Organizations Out of Fellowship? If a member of the church in good standing requests dismission to an unevangelical body, he should be labored with in love, and every right endeavor put forth to retain him in the fellowship of the church. But if he insists, he should not be thrust out harshly, or merely dropped from the roll. While a letter cannot be addressed to the unevangelical body, the member may be given a certificate that up to the time of his dismission he was a member in regular standing, and that his membership is terminated at his own request. The theory of Dr. Dexter, in the quotation below, is consistent, but few of our churches now hold rigidly to that practice.

Dismissal to Churches Not in Fellowship. If a member should request dismission to some unevangelical body, it would become the duty of the church to attempt to dissuade him from such a course, and, if he persists, to make him a subject of discipline, in some form. No church can give letters to a body with which it is not in full and fraternal fellowship. Neither can a church dismiss to no church; that is, terminate a member's relation without censure, and without transfer.—*Dexter:* Congregationalism, p. 187.

Form for Dismission. A suitable form for dismission of such members will be found in Barton's Congregational Manual.

May Church Members Be Dropped? The custom of "dropping from the roll" members who have long been absent or negligent, and who do not ask for, and perhaps do not desire letters, but whose lives are not such as to deserve expulsion, has come into such general use as to demand recognition and acceptance among us. But such

usage is justified only after a church has exhausted all reasonable effort to trace the whereabouts of absentees and endeavor to provide letters to other churches.

The habit of "dropping members" from the roll has been severely condemned by Dexter and nearly all authorities in our denomination, and on good logical grounds. Still the custom, as even Dexter admitted, is so convenient as almost to become a necessity in churches whose rolls have become cumbered with names of persons no longer known. Virtually the habit of dropping members is a very old one.

Dropping Members. Of late a few churches calling themselves Congregational have introduced a standing rule new to Congregationalism, by which, at the discretion of the body, members who have for a considerable time absented themselves from church communion, and who do not ask letters of dismission and commendation to other churches, instead of being dealt with as covenant-breakers and offenders, may be simply dropped from the roll. The propriety of such action has been the subject of sharp debate, more particularly in connection with a famous case where a member long time absent had circulated and promoted scandals derogatory to the Christian integrity of the pastor, and injurious to the reputation of the church, and the church had "dropped" him under circumstances in some minds giving color to the intimation that it was done in order to avoid what he might say in his defense were he to be proceeded with as an offender. The case came, indirectly, before one of the largest and most famous ecclesiastical councils of modern times, which advised [The Brooklyn Council of 1874, p. 232] that "the idea of membership in a Congregational church is the idea of a covenant between the individual member and the church"; that "voluntary absence does not dissolve that covenant, but is a reasonable ground of admonition, and, if persisted in, of final censure"; and should such an absentee be complained of as "having circulated and promoted scandal," etc., the "consideration that he has long ago forsaken the church, is only an aggravation of his alleged fault."

It is not to be denied that there are cases—especially when large churches, after a considerable period of neglect, are going over their lists of members, to find perhaps dozens and scores who have somehow slipped out of sight until no man knows their whereabouts—when to "drop" them would be the most convenient way of disposing of the subject.—*Dexter:* Handbook, pp. 109, 110.

A Member Departing to Non-Communion. He doth disfranchise and excommunicate himself. If a member thus withdraw, the church ought to declare, that he, being sinfully departed from them, is no longer under its watch, and is not to return till he hath given satisfaction to the church.—*Isaac Chauncey:* Divine Institution of Cong. Churches, pp. 116, 117.

It may sometimes come to pass that a church member, not

otherwise scandalous, may fully withdraw. . . . He having cut himself off from that church's communion, the church may justly esteem and declare itself discharged from any further inspection over him.—Congregational Order, Gen. Assn. of Conn., 1843, pp. 257-258.

May Letters Be Granted Without Dismission? A member of a church contemplating prolonged absence and desiring to establish relations with Christians in other places may ask the church for a letter of recommendation without dismission. Such letters have the force of a vote of confidence and of Christian introduction. They may be granted by the pastor or the clerk of the church without especial votes of authorization, but a vote of the church is orderly and carries more weight. Such letters have become common in churches in the vicinity of colleges where young people desire to establish church relationship during the years of their college course without terminating their membership in the home church. Such letters are useful and the custom deserves to be more widely adopted.

What Is the Status of Dismissed Members? Members who have been dismissed from a church remain members until their letters are accepted by the church to which they are dismissed. During the interval between the granting and the placing of their letters they remain members of the former church. They have no right to vote, but are subject to the rules of discipline. Should they be guilty of immorality their letter of recommendation may be cancelled, and fellowship withdrawn from them according to the regular rules of the church in matters of discipline.

Remains a Member. Order requires that a member thus removing have letters testimonial, and of dismission from the church whereof he yet is, unto the church whereunto he desireth to be joined, lest the church should be deluded; that the church may receive him in faith, and not be corrupted by receiving deceivers and false brethren. Until the person dismissed be received into another church, he ceaseth not by his letters of dismission to be a member of the church whereof he was. The church cannot make a member no member, but by excommunication.—Cambridge Platform, xiii, 7.

May Dismissed Members Vote? The principle here set

forth that members who have been dismissed but have not deposited their letters with other churches have no right to vote, is one that cannot be too strongly insisted upon. Although this is a point that has usually been overlooked by our authorities on church polity, it is a matter implied in the writings of most of them, and is the only possible position consistent with good sense. That a member should demand his letter, and having received it should remain in its meetings and vote, is wholly unreasonable and contrary to good order. For this reason we cannot accept the implication of Dr. Dexter that a dismissed member might be permitted to vote if there were no special rule. No such rule is necessary.

Dr. Dexter said: All dismissed members remain members in full of the dismissing church until they have actually been received by the church to which their relation is to be transferred; although some churches, by special rule, deprive such members of the right to vote except on surrender of the letter.—Handbook, p. 104.

Voting Members. Members in good standing, to whom the church has not voted letters of dismission, who are twenty-one years of age, or of the age prescribed by the state, and such only, may vote in the meetings of the church for business.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 75.

What Is the Status of a Member Who Partly Withdraws? It sometimes occurs that a member, in order to force or frustrate a certain action by the church, makes a conditional withdrawal from its membership, and perplexing questions have sometimes risen as to whether he is or is not still a member of the church. His status depends on the form of his own demand and on the action of the church. If he says: "If the church takes this proposed action I will withdraw," and the church does nevertheless take the proposed action, his threat does not end his membership, or even authorize the church to dismiss him. It is due him to treat his threat as a case of pique, and to hope that he will come to a different frame of mind. If he says: "If the church takes this action, it may consider this my request for dismission to the Methodist Church in this village," the church will be justified in following its action

by voting him his letter; but it will be better not to do so until he renews the request. If, however, the brother is a chronic resigner, habitually attempting to carry his will by threats of leaving the church, it may be well to take advantage of the first real application, and give him leave to depart in peace.

Should Letters Be Asked or Granted to Churches Which Will Not Receive Them? A member of a Congregational church desiring to withdraw to unite with an Episcopal or other church which will not receive letters from Congregational churches, should nevertheless in every case secure an orderly dismission from the Congregational church before uniting with the other. In case he fails to do it he is a proper subject of discipline, and his name should be dropped from the roll.

Churches should grant such letters in regular form. We cannot afford to measure our Christian courtesy by the possible discourtesy of others.

The records of the Old South Church in Boston inform us fully of the case of one Roger Jud, who in October, 1698, "was resolved to desert this church on account of some disgust taken." He went straight to the new Episcopal Church, without asking for a letter. The pastor of the Old South, Dr. Willard, sought to learn his grievance, and being treated with contempt, sought at least to have him go forth in an orderly way. But Jud, "having declared his renouncing communion with this church and accordingly deserted it, he refused to give account of it, when orderly called to it, and declared that he neither counted himself subject to the minister nor the church." His only word, given to Judge Samuel Sewall, was, "that now 'twas his conscience to go to the Church of England." But his conscience did not suggest to him that he should avail himself of the orderly method provided for dismission in the covenant which he had accepted on joining the Old South. Dr. Willard thus recorded the censure passed upon him: "The matter of his offense is not his going off from this

church; for wee acknowledge there is a lawfulness to do so, provided it bee orderly; but the manner of it." And, as he had refused to permit the church to dismiss him in a brotherly way, there remained for them the alternative of excommunicating him, which reluctantly they did, "till God shall give him repentance."

We could wish this first had also been the last instance of a Congregationalist going to the Episcopal or other church, in violation of his covenant agreement, without asking for a letter of dismission. Such action is needless and unchristian discourtesy, both on the part of the departing member and of the receiving church. Such church should refuse to receive members from other churches till they have terminated their relations with the bodies to which they belong. So long as a church stands ready to dismiss with brotherly love and in an orderly manner members desiring admission to other churches, no other church, whether it uses the letter or not, has a right to accept a member coming from such a church without his having applied for such a letter. His leaving in such manner is a violation of his covenant, in which he agrees to submit to the authority of the church until regularly dismissed therefrom. And a covenant breaker is not a fit person to be received into another church, nor should another church encourage the breaking of covenants.

What Is the Duty of a Church to Its Absent Members? Members of the church who have been absent for a period of years should be placed on a separate list from that of the active members. They should be encouraged to take letters to churches in their neighborhood and to relieve their home church from the burden of carrying a large number of absentees upon its list.

If such members continue to be absent for years, their names may properly be placed upon a suspended list and dropped entirely from the church roll. It sometimes happens, however, that people who have been absent for a long time at length appear and present requests for their letters.

Such requests may be granted in a form essentially as follows:

"This is to certify that Mr. A. B. became a member of this church on ....., 19....., and that his name continued upon its roll of members until ....., 19....., when, having moved from this community without asking for letters of dismission, his name was removed from our roll of members in accordance with the custom of the church. The church will be glad to know of his membership in some other Christian body."

Shall a Church Receive Members Who Cannot Assent to Its Creed? Congregationalism does not accept the principle of creed subscription as a condition of church membership. If the church creed is employed in the examination of candidates for church membership, it should be with the purpose of assisting them in the expression of their own faith and by no means as a test of their fitness to become members. No Congregational church has a moral right to make a creed for the purpose of keeping Christian people out. If a candidate for membership is a Christian he belongs in the church.

Subscription to a Creed Not Required for Membership. Nor is it consistent with Congregational principles for a particular church to draw up a creed and to require its acceptance by candidates for membership. A Christian church is not a private society, whose regulations can be modified by its members at their pleasure, but a society founded by Christ himself, and intended by Him to be the home of all Christians. Nothing, therefore, should be required of an applicant for membership but personal faith in Christ; this may exist, and there may be decisive evidence of its existence, in persons who have no clear intellectual apprehension of many of the great truths of the Christian gospel; it may exist, and there may be decisive evidence of its existence, in persons by whom some of these truths are rejected. Men come into the church, not because they have already mastered the contents of the Christian revelation, but to be taught them.—*Dale:* Cong. Manual, p. 186.

Nor yet can a church dominate the faith or conscience of its members. With such personal religious liberty no man, or combination of men, has a right to interfere. For such liberty and its lawful exercise each one is responsible to God alone. The church's authority goes not so far.—*Hiscox:* Baptist Directory, p. 50.

The same conception of the Church that requires that only those who believe in Christ should be admitted into a Christian church requires that none who believe in Him should be refused admission.—*Dale:* Cong. Manual, p. 49.

X. THE OFFICERS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

What Are the Officers of the Church? The essential officers of a church are those which enable it to perform its spiritual work in an orderly and effective fashion. As in the New Testament times, so now, church officers are of two groups, ministerial and lay. In the New Testament, as we have already seen, the officers were pastors and deacons, the pastors being called also presbyters, that is, elders and bishops. The laymen elected to perform special services in connection with the care of the poor and the assistance of the ministry were called deacons. These are the essential officers of the church. Even in the New Testament time it is apparent that church organization was something of specialization. Ministers were not merely pastors of local churches, they became also evangelists and itinerant apostles. Likewise also, at a very early time, the offices held by laymen manifested some of the effects of specialization. This principle is clearly recognized by Paul in Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. The development of church life in more recent times has called for still further specialization. The work of the ministry is now much wider than the local pastorate, involving administrative, secretarial, editorial and educational functions. The offices held by laymen also have increased in number and have widened the sphere of their activity. In addition to deacons, who formerly had charge of the secular interests of the church, there now are commonly trustees, who have more direct responsibility for the custody of the church's property and financial interests, while the deacons care for those matters more closely related to the work of the ministry. In some denominations the deacon is a candidate for the ministry, so that the diaconate has become a clerical instead of a lay office. This, however, was not the original intent; nor is it the method employed in Congregational churches.

Officers Not Absolutely Necessary. A church being a company of people combined together by covenant for the worship of God, it appeareth thereby, that there may be the essence and being of a church without any officers, seeing there is both the form and matter of a church; which is implied when it is said, the apostles ordained elders in every church.

Nevertheless, though officers be not absolutely necessary to the simple being of churches, when they be called, yet ordinarily to their calling they are, and to their well being; and therefore the Lord Jesus, out of his tender compassion, hath appointed and ordained officers, which he would not have done, if they had not been useful and needful for the church.—Cambridge Platform, vi, 1.

Officers Should Be Guides. Church officers are also more than servants; they are the chosen guides of the churches electing them. They are to see to it, each officer in his place, that the church they serve shall be trained and guided thoroughly in every function for the duties and labors required of it as a church of Christ. The pastor, as being the leader, or chief, or shepherd, by patience, loving suggestion, example, instruction, should secure the prompt and complete performance of every organic function, that his church may be thoroughly equipped, and active in every good work; so trained that every service and duty will go on regularly if the pastor be absent. Hence, though a pastor may in a noble sense be all things to all men, if by any means he may save some (I Cor. 9:20-23), yet he can not wisely be all the officers in a church. Nothing is more destructive of organic life and power than such dependence on the pastor, unless it be an unquestioning devotion to him. The first duty of the pastor is the development of the organic life of a church, so that it shall not be a congregation merely, but a trained band of workers, able to stand alone and carry on its functions and labors for a season as a church.—*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, p. 191.

What Are the Duties of the Pastor? The duties of the pastor are considered at length in a separate chapter. In the modern church they are fourfold. He is preacher, teacher, pastor and administrator. These duties vary according to the conditions of the local church, but they combine in some degree all these functions. It is safe to say that no man is equally effective in each of these four relations. It is also safe to affirm that a minister may not properly neglect any of them.

The Ministry a Rank of Service. Looking at the ministry in the modern specific sense, it is nothing less and can be nothing more than a rank of service. One is qualified for it by gifts, by training, by experience; these, on the Christian doctrine of the Spirit, constitute his inward call. But he enters it only through the call of some Christian company, itself presumptively an act in which Christ's Spirit was concerned. Imposition of hands is the

recognition of this double call, the solemn setting apart of the man chosen by a particular church to be its spiritual shepherd and administrative head. This act confers on him no gifts he did not have before. It gives him no priestly rights of his own. It is simply the formal transference to him of the priestly functions of the church, such as the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper (we might add marriage and burial).—*Heermance:* Democracy of the Church, pp. 142-143.

What Is a Deacon? A deacon is a layman, elected by a local church, to advise the pastor, to assist in the administration of the ordinances of the church, and to represent the church in the care of the poor and in the oversight of its discipline. The deacons of the church constitute *ex officiis* its committee on discipline, unless other provision is made for this branch of the work by the order of the church. The deacons share with the pastor responsibility for the religious services, particularly those of fellowship and prayer. They are his most intimate advisers, and should be his heartiest and most sympathetic supporters. In some churches deacons are elected for life; but in most churches the term of service is defined by the rules of the church.

How the New Testament deacons were chosen is indicated in Acts 6: 1-6. A sharp distinction is drawn between their duties and those of the ministry. Their appointment grew out of complaints that certain of the poor were neglected, particularly among the Gentile converts, and it is evident that these Gentile converts were represented among the seven deacons who were chosen. Two of these deacons, Stephen and Phillip, became evangelists, and this fact has served as a pretext for making the diaconate a subordinate order of the ministry. This, however, is unwarranted in the Scriptures. While a deacon may become a minister, and many deacons have done so, there is no indication in the New Testament that the diaconate was planned as a vestibule to the ministry, much less that it was intended to be a subordinate rank in the ministry itself.

The first deacons were chosen to attend to secular mat-

ters, particularly the distribution of alms. At that time it was not necessary to consider the care of real estate, for none of the churches had buildings of their own. The care of church property now calls for still more diversified organization, and many of the business affairs of the church are cared for by the trustees. The care of the poor, however, still remains the peculiar province of the deacons. For the rest, the larger responsibilities of the modern deacon are with the spiritual interests of the church.

The office of deacon ought to be held in great honor. It is the highest office in the church, excepting only that of the ministry itself. The title deacon ought to stand in popular thought, not as a term of ridicule or cheap merriment, but as one wherein the church expresses in a high degree its confidence in the character and efficiency of its own laity.

Duties of Deacons. The office of a deacon is instituted in the church by the Lord Jesus; sometimes they are called helps. The Scripture telleth us how they should be qualified, "Grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not given to filthy lucre." They must first be proved, and then use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. The office and work of the deacon is to receive the offerings of the church, gifts given to the church, and to keep the treasury of the church, and therewith to serve the tables which the church is to provide for; as the Lord's table, the table of the ministers, and of such as are in necessity, to whom they are to distribute in simplicity.—Cambridge Platform, vii, 3.

Term of Office of Deacons. It was formerly the custom to elect deacons for life, as indeed was the case with the minister. Those were the days when all men expected to remain in the same place for life, the lawyer, the merchant and the blacksmith, as well as the church officials. In our day, the deacons are generally elected for a term of years, usually so that only one vacancy may occur each year; or two, if the number of deacons be large. In many churches it is the rule that after one full term of service a deacon shall not be eligible for re-election until one year has passed. This leaves the church free to select, delivers it from the necessity of reappointing one who has not proved himself to be a valuable officer, enables it to drop one on the expiration of his term of office whom it would not choose if free to select, without casting slight on him, and develops material for such service from the younger men and the newcomers. Ordination to this office was once the general usage, but with the lapse of the life tenure has largely gone into disuse.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 55.

What Is the Office of the Deacon? To receive the offerings of the church, which are brought unto them, and laid down before them, and therewith to serve tables, to distribute with simplicity, not only to the ministers of the church, but to any other of the brethren, as they shall have use or need (Acts 6:3, 6; Rom. 12:8; I Tim. 5:17, 18; Acts 4:35; I Cor. 16).

But is it not also the deacon's office to show mercy with cheerfulness? Yes, verily, to their brethren in misery; but that part of their office, they cheerfully perform by the hand of the widows, which are chosen into their number, who are therefore called deaconesses or servants of the church (Rom. 12:8; Micah 7:18).—Questions and Answers Upon Church Government by John Cotton, 1634. From Manuscript of Henry M. Dexter, Yale University Library.

What Is a Deaconess? In the New Testament churches certain women were elected to offices. There were deaconesses as well as deacons, and there appears also to have been an order of "widows," composed of women who no longer had home ties, and who, being of mature age and Christian experience, were set apart for special service, particularly in the instruction of the younger women of the church. Any church is at liberty to provide for the election of deaconesses out of its own membership. These may or may not serve on the board of deacons with advice and counsel. In churches where deaconesses are elected it is not customary for them to serve in the administration of the ordinances, but only to sit in council with the deacons and to share their work in the gentler offices of discipline and in the effective relief of the poor. In some churches where no deaconesses are elected, it is customary to elect a Prudential Committee, of which part of the members are women. Often the pastor's wife is a member *ex officio* of this committee.

More recently there has risen among us a new interpretation of the office of deaconess, as that of a woman trained as a church visitor or pastor's assistant, not necessarily elected from the membership of the local church, but employed as a salaried agent of the church. This office has justified itself in practice, and the status of a deaconess is that of a salaried worker, whose term of service and the

definition of whose duties are to be determined by the local church.

The title deaconess appears after some experiment not to be a popular one in Congregationalism. The increasing number of young women who are entering the service of our churches as salaried workers wear no distinctive garb, and appear to desire not to be confused with women in other denominations who are designated by that term. At the National Council of 1915 a national organization of women serving the churches in the capacities of pastor's assistants, directors of education and of young people's work, secretarial assistants and parish visitors, and the general name of "church assistants" was chosen to cover all these groups of workers.

A deaconess is not necessarily the wife of a deacon. This matter was discussed in early New England, and of it Cotton Mather said:

'Tis often inquired, when deacons are chosen, whether their wives are such as directed; but there is a mistake about the meaning of the text in I Tim. 3:11. It is *gunaikes*, women, i. e., the deaconesses or widows; and there is not there one word about deacons' wives any more than the pastors'.—Rat. Dis., 131.

What Manner of Widows Hath God Allowed to Be Chosen Into This Number? Ancient women, of sixty years of age, well reported of for good works, for nursing their children, lodging strangers, washing the saints' feet, for relieving the afflicted, and following diligently every good work (I Tim. 5:9, 10; Rom. 6).—Questions and Answers Upon Church Government by John Cotton, 1634. From Manuscript of Henry M. Dexter, Yale University Library.

Deacons and Deaconesses. To the Deacons office we would adde Deaconesses, where such may be had, according to which should be widows of the Church, faithfull, approved, and full of good works, who give themselves to works of mercy cheerfully; and to be serviceable also to those that are sick, when the Deacon so conveniently cannot, and sometime so modestly may not send their help as that sex may.—*T. Welde:* A Brief Narration of the Practices of the Churches in New England, London, 1645.

Should Deacons Be Installed? The custom of our churches varies. Many churches install their deacons, and it is altogether fitting that this should be done.

Forms for the Installation of Deacons will be found in Barton's Congregational Manual, pp. 224-225.

Should Other Officers Be Installed? It is proper that the church should install its officers other than deacons if it sees fit so to do.

A convenient form for the installation of officers other than deacons will be found in Barton's Congregational Manual, p. 225.

What Are the Duties of the Clerk? It is the duty of a church clerk to record faithfully all business transacted by the church, to keep a careful list of its members, together with dates of their admission, the form of their reception, whether by confession or by letter, and if by letter, from what church, and the manner and date of their dismission. It is his duty also to record all baptisms, both infant and adult, all deaths and marriages, and other important events in the life of the church and of its members. It is his duty to issue credentials to all delegates who are elected to represent the church, and to certify such accounts as may be required by him. He should keep the records of the church in his custody, being careful to protect them from fire or other loss, should hold them at all times subject to the inspection of the pastor or the officers of the church, and render an annual report to the church of the performance of all his duties.

The Clerk a Custodian for the Church. In like manner, the clerk can not withhold papers, documents, or records belonging to the church, or correspondence as clerk, on the plea that they are private property, but must, instead, as the servant of the church, produce them when required. He is only custodian for the church. Church officers are the servants of the churches that elect them, and they that serve best are the greatest.—*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, p. 191.

What Is the Duty of the Treasurer? The church treasurer should receive and hold all moneys of the church and its benevolences. He should keep them separate from all moneys of his own, depositing them in some secure bank in the name of the church, and drawing upon them only in accordance with the vote of the church or of its authorized officers. He should render to the church at stated intervals and whenever required, full written reports showing the

receipt and disposition of all funds submitted to him. These reports should be duly audited, and when approved by the church should be deposited with the clerk.

Fidelity of Treasurers. On January 1st the Episcopal Church begins the year with the certainty of a few thousand dollars, the income from endowments, and although it has no legal power to collect another dollar, the church closes its accounts twelve months later with some $20,000,000 to $30,000,000 contributed and paid out. That sum has come into the different treasuries in perhaps a hundred million items. It has been counted, handled, and expended by some twenty thousand treasurers, collectors and other agents, most of whom have had no education in financial administration, and little experience in accounts. Imperfect as is the administration, the marvel is that the work on the whole is so well done, for we must remember that practically the whole work is done as a labor of love and loyalty without salary or other compensation.—*Bishop William Lawrence*, quoted in the Journal of Accountancy, April, 1915.

What Is the Duty of the Trustees? The trustees of the church should attend to its business interests according to their powers as prescribed by the rules of the church. They should care for the church property and keep it in repair; they should be diligent in maintaining the church finances upon a basis of dignity and prosperity. They are the custodians of the church property in all matters other than those that are distinctly religious. They have no authority to forbid the use of the church building to the pastor or deacons for any spiritual use, and in any question of the use of the building for social, literary or other purpose not distinctly religious, the authority of the trustees is subject to the will of the church. The trustees should always regard the secular life of the church as subordinate to its religious life, and should carefully avoid any importing of the financial affairs of the organization into its spiritual concerns in such a way as to work disadvantageously to the spiritual interests of the organization. While they should conduct the business affairs of the church in a businesslike manner, paying its bills promptly and carefully keeping its credit above reproach, they should with equal care avoid bringing into the temple of God the atmosphere

of the market, and making the house of prayer a den of thieves or a babel of business.

May a Church Vacate an Office? A church rarely declares an office vacant, and yet has an undoubted right to do so for good cause. Such a proceeding would have virtually the effect of a suspension of the rules, and should be possible by no smaller majority than would be required for such suspension. If the office is one that is filled by ballot, the vote to vacate should also be taken by ballot.

The vacating of an office is a very unusual act, and ought to be discouraged. An officer elected for a definite term should be permitted to serve out his term in all but the most extreme cases. We cannot accept the statement of Dexter that the removal of an officer who has been elected for a definite term can be accomplished by a majority vote. Such a vote would be a virtual suspension of a rule, i. e., the rule governing the term of an election, and must require not less than a two-thirds vote.

How to Vacate Church Offices. The simple principle governing this is that the power which sets up is always competent to set down; so that whenever the church which has elected a member to an office because it thought him most suitable for that honor and that duty, sees reason to change its mind, and becomes convinced that the best interests of the cause of Christ require another arrangement, it has as much—and the same—power to bring about that change, as it had to produce the condition of things that now is. Whenever, then, it comes to be felt by the majority of a church that its best interests demand the removal of any person whom it has placed in any position of official power and responsibility, it should pass a vote kindly and clearly stating that fact, and requesting that person to resign. If this prove ineffectual it should next—in all cases except where the pastorate is concerned—pass a second vote removing the party from his office; which office, thus vacated, it may then proceed to fill. Such a vote is not necessarily, even impliedly, a censure upon the Christian—but only upon the official—character of the party (whether committee-man or deacon) removed; and therefore he cannot effectually object against it that it is a covert attempt to discipline him in an unscriptural manner.—*Dexter:* Handbook, p. 112.

Power of Church to Dismiss Its Officers. And if the church have power to choose their officers and ministers, then in case of manifest unworthiness and delinquency, they have power also to depose them: for to open and shut, to choose and refuse, to constitute in office and remove from office, are acts belonging to the same power.—Cambridge Platform, vii, 7.

If every church be formed by confederation and has an independent right to exercise all ecclesiastical power, then they have a right to dismiss their own minister, whenever they judge he has forfeited his ministerial character. As the church have a right to choose and ordain their own minister, so they must have, of course, a right to dismiss him for what they deem good reasons. Those who have a right to put into office, have a right to put out of office.—*Emmons:* Platform Eccl. Govt., Inference I.

Were the New Testament Deacons Candidates for the Ministry? From the fact that Stephen and Philip became evangelists, it has sometimes been inferred that the New Testament diaconate was a condition of candidacy for the ministry. The inference is not justified. That some deacons entered the ministry was to have been expected, and it is to be hoped that always there will be deacons who preach, either as ministers or as laymen; but the office of a deacon is not in itself a step toward the ministry.

Some further support to the idea has been found in I Timothy 3:8; but this inference is not warranted, as is conceded by scholars even in the communions where the diaconate is regarded as a lower order of the ministry.

Promotion of Deacons. The last verse, I Tim. 3:13, has been often understood to say that excellent discharge of the duties of a deacon would rightly entitle him to promotion to a higher kind of work, doubtless that of an elder. "Standing" undeniably means a step, and so might easily be used for a grade of dignity or function. But the rest of the verse renders this interpretation unnatural; and the true sense doubtless is that deacons by excellent discharge of their duties may win for themselves an excellent vantage ground, a standing a little as it were above the common level, enabling them to exercise an influence and moral authority to which their work as such could not entitle them.—*Hort:* The Christian Ecclesia, pp. 201-202.

XI. RELIGIOUS CORPORATIONS

What Is a Religious Corporation? A religious corporation is a society, not for pecuniary profit, organized for religious purposes and incorporated by law. Religious corporations differ in their legal status in the several states of the Union. In general, however, the laws favor their organization, and their legal status is simple. In some states the life of any one corporation is limited to a term of years. In some there is a limitation of the amount of property which any one corporation can hold. There is limitation also upon the forms in which such property may be held. As a general principle of law perpetuities are not regarded with favor. The essential differences between a corporation and an individual are: first, the impersonality of the corporation. It is not an individual, but an artificial person. As such it is a creature of the law and strictly speaking has no rights which the law is bound to respect. Certain rights which belong to individuals do not apply to corporations. The second characteristic of a corporation is its continuity. Men die, and their estates and other interests pass to other hands, but corporations may go on forever. The laws of the Middle Ages recognized grave dangers as inherent in such a system, and the English laws of mortmain were intended as a check upon the growth of corporate bodies, many of which were religious in character. At the present time the growth of large commercial corporations is seen to involve possibilities of national peril. Past history has afforded illustrations of the peril which may, and sometimes does, inhere in religious corporations. For reasons that in general have been good, the laws of various states and countries have imposed certain restrictions upon religious corporations. Some of these actions have been arbitrary, and not all of them have been just, but there has been a reason for some even of the more arbitrary acts.

There is another characteristic of the religious corporation which should be noted. While it can sue and be sued in law, its appearance in court must be through a representative. If a secular corporation is sued it must answer by attorney; the whole body of stockholders presumably cannot be present, and if they could be present they would not be permitted to answer individually. If a church sues, or is sued, it must appear by attorney. It must authorize someone to speak for it with a single vote.

The church corporation, the body which administers the secular affairs of the church, is amenable to the courts more directly than the church as a spiritual organization; with which, acting within its own powers, and on matters wholly spiritual, the secular courts have no legitimate concern.

What Is a Parish? A parish is a corporate body related to the local church, and organized for its support and the transaction of its secular business. Originally the parish was a territorial designation. It was ordinarily coterminus with the town or township. In Massachusetts it was necessary that a man be a citizen of the parish in order to be a bona fide resident of the state. In its inception the parish goes back to a remote period. The parish is no longer territorial, but is composed of individuals, being essentially what was formerly known as "poll-parish," and is thus virtually the same as an ecclesiastical society.

What Is a Religious Society? As it is recognized by the laws of Massachusetts, a religious society is a body of persons associated together for certain purposes, supposedly religious, with a code of by-laws governing the admission of members, the election of officers, and the method of calling legal meetings. Before 1869 it was a body of men only. It is supposed to employ a minister, or "Teacher of Morality and Religion," and to maintain public services of preaching and worship, though the law does not make this obligatory. It has the power of contracting with a minister for his "support and maintenance," and to determine his tenure of office. The duties and responsibilities of its officers are defined by the laws of the commonwealth. The Statutes are its constitution. It is empowered to hold a limited amount of property for special purposes, which it holds in fact and in law as a trustee for the benefit of the community where it is located. If it disbands,

the Supreme Judicial Court determines what shall be done with the property. In law, it is a "charity."

A church is a different affair. It is a body of men and women, and sometimes children, associated together under a covenant, or bond of agreement, for the public worship of God, for mutual discipline and helpfulness, and for the advancement of the religious life of the community. It usually expresses its sense of fellowship by symbols. Sometimes it has a creed setting forth the doctrines and principles that are taken to be its working hypothesis. Its aims are supposed to be spiritual as distinguished from material.

If it is incorporated and performs the functions stated above, it is recognized by the law as a "religious society" in the meaning of the Statutes. Otherwise it has never been recognized by the law as a religious society having any powers or rights, or even as having any existence independently of some religious society or congregation with which it is connected. Legally, it is a veritable "Church Invisible."

When the parish first assumed importance as a corporation distinct from the town is a matter very difficult to determine. But the date is not essential. Practically the line was drawn when, for convenience of attending public worship, a town was divided into districts or precincts, and prudential men, assessors and collectors were appointed to administer the parochial affairs of the districts so set off. Chief Justice Parsons as early as 1809 says: "When no part of a town is included in, or constitutes a parish, the duties of a parish are required of the town." "Every town is considered to be a parish until a separate parish be formed in it: then the inhabitants and territory not included in the separate parish form the first parish." Parishes and towns are distinct corporations. They must subsist together and act apart.

Chief Justice Parker says: "It was the usage of all our towns anciently, before they became divided into parishes, to transact their parochial concerns at town meetings, making no difference in the forms of their proceedings when acting upon matters of mere municipal or political concern." From this we may draw the inference that the early settlers brought with them the old English idea of the parish, but made no legal distinction between town and parish until such became necessary for the preservation of property rights.

In the enactments of the General Court, we find the duties of parishes first set forth in a Province law of 1702. By this act, if the selectmen and constables neglect their parochial duties the court of general sessions for the county, after heavily fining them, is directed and empowered to appoint three or more sufficient freeholders within the same county to assess and apportion the sum agreed upon for the support of the ministry, the same as taxes are assessed and collected by the towns, and pay the same to the minister or ministers. It also gives to inhabitants of a district or precinct the power to appoint parish officers, with the same parochial powers as the officers of a town.

During this period a large number of religious societies or parishes were incorporated within the territory of towns, the inhabi-

tants of the town freely choosing the parish to which their parochial tax should be paid.

Quakers and Baptists were excused from paying parish taxes on account of conscience, in 1728. Episcopalians were refused relief if they lived more than five miles from an Episcopal church, because they had no conscientious scruples about attending a parish church.

In religious affairs, as in political, the period was one of general ferment. Liberalism was growing, both in matters of faith and in the spirit of individual liberty. While no radical changes in legislation concerning religious affairs are noticeable, the trend of thought and feeling in the latter years of the period was decidedly in the direction of making the support of the ministry voluntary in every respect.

Finally, the movement culminated in the Eleventh Amendment to the Constitution, which made a complete separation between the parish and the town. It took away from the towns the right to choose ministers, and gave it to the several religious societies. It also gave the societies the right to raise money for building, for support, and the power to make contracts, and secured to members their rights.

The supporting law of 1834 declared the various existing religious societies to be bodies corporate, for a purpose, with the same rights that towns acting in parochial capacities had heretofore exercised, and confirmed the privileges of churches connected with them.

The marked difference is, that while, up to this time, all inhabitants who had not been excused by law and who had not designated the parish to which they chose to be attached, had been taken to be members of the first parish, and no inhabitant could be excluded from the parish of his choice, now and henceforth parishes were to be composed of men who chose to be members and who were admitted by vote of the members already composing the parish. The parishes thus became close corporations. The original corporate or "charter" members were those inhabitants who were members of the parish before the separation.

Parishes now adopted by-laws governing the admission of members. The parish, like the church, became a voluntary organization, and, like the church, self-perpetuating. All the parochial property of the town, meeting house, lands, donations, burial grounds, now vested in the First Parish, or in the parish that succeeded to the parochial rights of a territorial precinct or district.

Henceforth, the important matter of calling a minister, as it lay between parish and church, became wholly a matter of usage, though the power to make contracts remained with the parish.

The parish had evolved from a territorial affair to a personal affair. In relation to the public, great changes had taken place. Whereas in the Colonial period the church was the body of supreme social and religious importance, now the parish, by reason of its authority over the sources of supply, became the body of chief importance. No man need belong to a parish or to a church. But tradition, conventionalities, social standing, family inheritances and respect compelled men who would stand well in the community to

identify themselves with a religious society. The parish, unlike the church, assumed no jurisdiction over the conscience or beliefs of its members and had no means of discipline.—*J. N. Pardee:* The Church and Parish in Massachusetts, pp. 8-24.

What Is an Ecclesiastical Society? An ecclesiastical society is a corporate body, usually in affiliation with a local church, and entrusted with the care of its property in part or in whole, and with the management of such of its secular affairs as its charter or constitution or its compact with the church accord to it. In general it may be stated that the ecclesiastical society succeeds to the duties formerly devolving upon the parish.

May a Society Exist Without a Church? A society may exist without a church. The Blue Hill Ecclesiastical Society, of Readville, Mass., is an example. For many years it has existed and owned a place of worship, its members holding their church relations in various churches, most of them in the neighboring town of Hyde Park. For the purpose, however, of maintaining worship in the neighborhood where these people resided, an ecclesiastical society is established and maintained, and is not in affiliation with any local church.

May a Local Church Exist Without a Society? A local church may exist without a society, and usually is better off without one. The famous Dedham case of 1820 Baker vs. Fales, 16 Mass. 488) decided that a Congregational church cannot exist apart from a society. This, however, was very doubtful law even at that time, and is far from being good law now.

What Are the Reasons for a Society? The reasons which have been given in favor of an ecclesiastical society are that it permits the vested interests of the church to be cared for by a selected group of responsible men. A church includes in its membership women and young children, many of whom are supposed to have little business experience. A society may limit its membership to those who are supposed to have mature business judgment, and can include some men who, while not members of the church,

still are interested in its welfare, who are contributors to its support, and whose business judgment is likely to be of value. The advantages of the system, however, do not equal its disadvantages. It is a system which sometimes works well, but it has been fruitful of friction, and it is rather surprising that this friction has not been more rather than less. Dr. Dexter, in his Congregational Manual, earnestly advised against it.

The Unitarians, who inherited the parish system from us and in the beginning profited by it in the famous Dedham decision of 1820, have found it an incumbrance in many cases. The American Unitarian Association has issued an interesting booklet, entitled "The Parish and Church in Massachusetts," by Rev. Joseph N. Pardee, which is furnished free and which advises churches as to methods of eliminating the parish or society.

Joint Church and Parish System. Could the subject now be arranged in view of the experience of the past, and in disregard of all other considerations, I can hardly conceive it possible that any intelligent and hearty Congregationalist would advocate the common New England joint church and parish system as abstractly best for the church, or for the interests of vital godliness in the land. Such being the fact, it would seem to be an easy inference that the true policy to be pursued is to discontinue the ecclesiastical society altogether, wherever it prove to be legally possible without detriment to the safe administration of the pecuniary interests of the church; and in all cases where a society be still on the whole advisable, to mitigate its evils by putting it as closely as possible under church control, or at least augmenting as largely as may be church influence within it.

In all cases where the question becomes a practical one, then it is to be recommended that the advice of a Christian lawyer familiar with the local laws be taken, and that where, in his judgment, a society be indispensable, if it be possible, make it one of its fundamental laws that membership in it be limited to members of the church.—*Dexter:* Handbook, pp. 95-96.

What Are the Powers and Limitations of the Society? Where a society exists, it is a holding corporation, managing the business interests of the church. It owns the church property, subject to the use of the church, but can have no power to alienate the property or to use it for purposes contrary to the welfare of the church. It can, however,

refuse to provide means for the repair of the building or for the support of its minister, and this it sometimes has been known to do, though happily not frequently.

Both church and society must concur in the call of a pastor. The action must originate with the church, the society having no power to begin proceedings looking toward the securing of the minister. The church having issued an invitation to a pastor, first notifies the society of its proposed call, and the society considers whether it will concur in the call and provide for the support of the minister. The society has sole power to fix the compensation of the pastor, and is the only body that can be sued. The church alone is responsible for the conduct of the pastor, who is not commonly a member of the society, but should be a member of the church. Should the minister displease the society, he cannot be expelled by that body without the consent of the church. The society can, however, refuse to support him. If he is installed by council or has a contract for a definite period, his salary can be collected from the society by civil process. Should the church desire to terminate the pastorate, the concurrence of the society must be secured, and if the minister is installed by council both church and society must join in the call.

What Are the Relations of Church and Society? The relations of church and society are various, and dependent upon the compact existing between them. In some of the older churches the parish has far too great power. Wherever church and society, or parish, exist together, the church should be made superior in every spiritual interest. In no case should the parish usurp authority over the church, or use its power over the purse of the congregation to force an action detrimental to the spiritual interests of the church. The following rules from Dexter's Handbook are usual in the relations of church and society:

Form of Rules for Joint Action of the ..... Congregational Church and ..... Congregational Society

I.

Whenever the church and society shall be without a settled

pastor and a new one is to be obtained, a joint committee of the church and society, consisting of seven persons, of whom four shall be chosen by the church and three by the society, shall provide a supply for the pulpit, and take all necessary measures to that end. The church shall have the right, in all cases, to select a pastor (or colleague pastor, when it may be deemed expedient by the church and society to settle a colleague pastor), to be proposed to the society for its concurrence. If said society shall concur with the church in said selection, a call shall be given by the church and society jointly, to the person selected; but if the society do not concur in the selection, the church shall select again, and so again, from time to time, until the church and society shall agree in a choice, and when so agreed, a call shall be given to the person so chosen, by the church and society as stated above; that is, jointly. It is herein agreed that no committee of supply of the pulpit shall ever have the power to contract with any minister to occupy the pulpit as "stated supply" or "acting pastor"—and no minister shall so occupy it—for a period longer than three months, without special instruction to that effect by both church and society at meetings legally called for that purpose.

II.

The amount of salary to be given to the pastor shall be fixed by the society.

III.

Temporary supply of the pulpit, during the absence or sickness of the pastor, shall be provided by the pastor and deacons of the church, and the bills of necessary expenses incurred for that purpose shall be submitted to the prudential committee of the society, and, when approved by them, shall be paid by the treasurer. By the word "church," hereinbefore used, is meant all (male) members of the church in good and regular standing, of the age of twenty-one years and upwards.

IV.

A committee to regulate the matter of singing, and of church music, shall be appointed jointly by the church and society (annually), three persons by the former, and two by the latter.

V.

No alteration shall be made in these rules, on the part of either church or society, unless the same be agreed to by two-thirds of the members of each, present at legal meetings, seasonable notice of such proposed alteration having been previously given.—*Dexter:* Handbook, pp. 186-187.

In the interpretation of the foregoing or any other rules governing the relations of church and society, or parish, it should steadily be kept in mind that the parish, or society, exists solely by reason of a condition so different from that which now obtains that practically none of the new Congregational churches are organizing after this fashion. The whole trend of our modern Congregational life is to empha-

size the right of the religious body to assume direct corporate powers.

Should the Minister Attend Meetings of the Society? Unless the minister is a member of the society he has no technical right to be present at its meetings, except by invitation. It is entirely becoming, however, that he should be invited to attend and that his suggestions should be heard with courtesy. Where the pastor does not attend the meetings of the society, it would be becoming for the Board of Trustees in advance of any meeting of the society to have a conference with the pastor and to present his views. Where the pastor is not a member of the society, his relation to the body is somewhat analogous to that of the President of the United States in his relations to Congress, and a message from the pastor should always receive courteous attention.

How May a Church Free Itself from Relations with a Society? Many churches organized in affiliation with societies in days when the laws for the incorporation of churches were less favorable than now, desire to be rid of an arrangement for which no good reason longer exists. The author has received inquiries from scores, probably hundreds, of churches, asking how they may dispense with a society. It must be remembered that the church and the society are separate institutions. A church cannot abolish a society against the society's will, nor can it abrogate a joint agreement excepting by mutual consent. It is not usually wise for a church to attempt to abolish a society unless at least two-thirds of the members of the society agree that it is desirable. If the church feels that the society is no longer of use, it should first ascertain whether the society concurs in the opinion; if it does, the plan is a simple one. A good Christian lawyer should ordinarily be consulted, but where there are no complications the following directions will suffice:

First, the church itself should become incorporated. Being incorporated, it should express to the society its

willingness to receive any property which the society desires to transfer to the church. It should then wait the action of the society.

For the incorporation of a church see the author's Manual, pp. 93-95.

Secondly, the society should hold a regularly called meeting, setting forth as the business of the meeting the proposed transfer of its property, both real and personal, to the incorporated church. Whether this action requires a majority or two-thirds vote will depend upon the rules of the society, but as a matter of expediency and of brotherly spirit it should seldom, if ever, be undertaken with less than a two-thirds vote.

Thirdly, the society can then make a deed of all its real estate to the incorporated church, and also a bill of sale of all its personal property.

Fourthly, the society may then disband, and ordinarily should do so. Occasionally it will be found an advantage to continue the corporate existence of the society. The author has known of one or two cases where the vested interests appeared to make this advisable. In such a case the society continues a mere nominal existence without property rights or any measurable control of the affairs of the church. Manifestly this condition is not usually desirable to perpetuate, and it is better that the society disband in an orderly and dignified manner, and turn over its books to the church than that it should die a lingering death and finally disappear.

Fifthly, the church should hold a meeting, which ordinarily may occur at the same time and place, in which its officers receive the papers transferred by the society and formally accept the trust reposed in the church and transact any necessary business. If the trustees have hitherto been officers of the society and the church has had no trustees, its constitution will have been amended in its incorporation so that these officers shall now be chosen by the church. They may have been elected previously. It is not necessary

to wait for the formal transfer of the property before officers are chosen to receive it. Whatever business remains for the church to perform after the society has completed its work, should be done in a careful manner, so as to insure all vested rights.

The church has one remaining duty which it should consider with great care. Often it will be found that a few men who have hitherto been members of the society and active in its affairs are not members of the church. Sometimes these are conscientious and faithful men who feel keenly the fact that they can no longer express in the same manner as hitherto their interest in the welfare of the church. Great consideration should be shown these men. If they are men of worthy life, possessing the essentials of a Christian faith, the church can well afford to waive some of its usual forms and conditions in order to make it easy for them to become members of the church. In some cases known to the author, the dissolution of the society has proved the occasion for the showing of the very finest Christian qualities on the part of the members of the society and has resulted in their uniting with the church under very happy conditions.

XII. AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

What Are Affiliated Organizations? The development of religious work in modern times has called into existence a wide variety of agencies in more or less close affiliation with local churches or groups of churches. Among these are Sunday schools, Christian Endeavor societies, Young Women's and Young Men's Christian Associations, Bible societies, Brotherhoods, and other organizations or benevolent activities. No one plan can be said to govern these different organizations. They may be so planned as to be under the direct control of a local church; they may be organically independent but with all officers chosen from the membership of the local church and with the pastor so related to the organization as to exert a practical control. They may be entirely independent, yet working in close sympathy with the church as an organization. The wide diversity of these organizations, both in respect of their forms of government and the purposes for which they are organized, renders generalization difficult. Manifestly, any organization using the church property and the church name should be so far answerable to the church as definitely to promote the welfare of the church and advance some one of the ends for which it exists. It is inherently desirable that every such organization should be related to the organic life and structure of the church.

Affiliated Organizations. Most of our churches have young people's societies, missionary societies, men's clubs and women's societies of various kinds. The more these can be unified with the church organization the better. Of course if they elect their officers independently of it, they cannot be officially represented in its counsels; but frequent meetings of all who lead in the spiritual or charitable activities of the congregation are desirable and tend to unity in the whole body. In this way conflicting appointments and, what is worse, conflicting plans are avoided. The contributions of these various sub-organizations should be sent to their various objects through the treasurer of the church, so that they may be received and recorded as from its several departments.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, pp. 58-59.

Liberty of Organization. In the matter of Sunday schools, prayer meetings, sewing circles and other social meetings, and the general administration of religious affairs, Congregational churches differ in no way from other active Christians; and it is their fundamental principle that their polity has congenial and welcome place for every wise method of working for the glory of God, and the temporal and eternal good of men, which sanctified ingenuity can devise, and Christian common sense indorse.—*Dexter:* Handbook, p. 88.

What Is a Sunday School? A Sunday school is an organization for Bible instruction, and may exist either independently or under the control of a church. Where a Sunday school exists in connection with a church, it should not be considered an independent organization. Its superintendent should be elected by the church on nomination of the teachers of the Sunday school. The church should appropriate money for the support of the school, and the school should make its offering for the support of the church. Great care should be taken, both on the part of the church and of the Sunday school, to prevent any impression that the Sunday school is an organization outside of the church.

In theory the Sunday school should be an organic part of the church organization. In a majority of churches probably the Sunday school exists as an independent body, electing its own officers and raising the money for its own support, except for its free use of the church building.

Sunday School a Part of the Church. The Sunday school should be recognized fully as part of the church and by no means an unimportant part of it. It is an organization by itself, so far as it has officers of its own, but the superintendent should always be elected as one of the officers of the church and should be an *ex-officio* member of the standing committee, so that there may be the closest relations between the Sunday school and the other parts of the church organization. He should select the teachers so far as possible from the members of the church, and with them should appoint the other officers of the school, who with him should form a Sunday school committee, to serve the Sunday school in a way similar to that in which the church committee serves the church. The current expenses of the Sunday school, as being an essential part of the organization, should be met from the general treasury of the church.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 58.

What Is the Pastor's Place in the Sunday School? The

pastor is also the teacher of the church, and therefore is the first teacher in the Sunday school. He should enter into consultation with the officers of the Sunday school concerning courses of study and methods of instruction. His judgment should be given weight, and in all ordinary cases his wishes should be scrupulously regarded; but every pastor should be careful not to enforce his leadership in unseemly ways or underrate the prerogatives of his subordinates. He may not remove a teacher from the Sunday school by an arbitrary act of his own, but must accomplish any desired change through the superintendent. No teacher or superintendent should abuse this liberty by exalting his own authority above that of the pastor. The authority of the superintendent is a delegated authority, and must be so regarded. Yet as the captain of a ship has, while at sea, an authority over his ship which even the owner, if a passenger, must respect, and may put the owner in irons as a mutineer if he transgresses his rightful authority, so the pastor must remember that the authority of each of his subordinates must be commensurate with his responsibility in the conduct of his office.

How Shall the Church Conduct the Work of Its Women? The organizations of the women of the church are to be formed and maintained subject to the approval of the church. The women's missionary societies should adopt only such constitutions and rules for their government as are approved by the church. In some churches the women maintain separate missionary organizations for local work and for missionary work; and the missionary organizations are sometimes divided between home missionary and foreign missionary societies. The present tendency is toward simplicity of organization, with one society for all the women of the church, and programs, in charge of separate committees, alternating between home and foreign missions, and with work so distributed as to give adequate representation to the various activities which form a part of the society's work.

Women's Societies. An excellent way of bringing the various independent societies for women in a church together is for the women to have a general organization with a presiding officer and a secretary, of which all these various societies for home and foreign work and for church aid shall be committees. It is easy thus to bring all the women of the church together to make plans for any special work which is to come upon them all, as well as to unify their common work and bring its various departments into touch. The same simple federation of all the organizations for men is desirable, and may be accomplished in connection with a men's club. The ideal way is to conduct all these activities as parts of the one church. No part of the church should ever act or speak as though it were independent of it, or of the results of its effort as though it were not part of the church; more than all it should never be named in contrast to the church.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 59.

What Is the Office of a Brotherhood? A brotherhood or other organization of the men of the church may be formed for co-operation with the church and its pastor in promoting any or all of the objects for which the church is established. Its constitution should be approved by the church either formally or by general consent. It is not always or even often necessary that the precise form of each detail should be required to be passed upon by the church in its official capacity. It is usually enough that the wishes of the church and pastor are known and complied with, and that the spirit of the organization be that of thorough accord and in harmony with the spirit of the church.

Do These Organizations Exist for Their Own Ends? It is as wrong in theory as in practice for any organization related to the church to think of itself as existing for its own sake or for the mere pleasure of its members. Every such organization exists, or ought to exist, as an instrument of the church for the doing of some part of its work, and it should cultivate within itself a constant spirit of loyalty and of helpfulness.

All the organizations should be correlated in such fashion that they shall have an organic relation to the church and that their work shall be a part of its work.

The church should not delegate its educational work to

an outside organization known as the Sunday school, nor its missionary work to an isolated group organized as the missionary society, but the church should be organized for an educational program and missionary propaganda in which various organizations, whether men or women, young people or others, may adequately express the life and effort of the church working through them.

A Constructive Program. A comprehensive program for training our own church people, and especially the rising generation, in Christian life, for Christian service and for Christian leadership, would include the elements sketched below. In respect to literature and courses of study, this program would enter around the Sunday School curriculum.

(1) Every church should have a school graded according to the best possibilities in each case, with lesson materials properly adapted to the scheme of gradation.

(2) Training in missions should be made a part of the curriculum, with courses of study prepared by an editor or secretary responsible for all the denominational literature, in co-operation with the missionary secretaries.

(3) Training in social service should be provided for through simple courses in the grades and more extended courses in adult classes, with actual work by groups and individuals under competent direction in local charities, missionary enterprises, etc.

(4) There should be courses in the Sunday School or in pastors' training classes for the development of personal religion, and the preparation of our young people for church membership. There are churches in our denomination which have worked out excellent systems which might well serve as patterns to work by.

(5) There should be courses in the essentials of church history and Congregational polity, with thoughtful provision for training in church administration.

(6) There should be courses for parents, intended as helps to religious nurture in the home.

(7) There should be courses for college and university students, intended to foster their personal religion and to prepare them for religious and social service in and through their home churches when they return; such courses to be given by churches located in the college town whenever possible.

(8) The plan should include active measures for bringing the vocation of the ministry to the attention of our best young men in convincing fashion.—Report of the Commission on Moral and Religious Education, National Council of 1915.

XIII. CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY

Who Should Be Regarded as Candidates for the Ministry? Men who have been called of God to preach, and who have accepted that call as they have understood and received it, and who have been recognized by the church through some authorized body as apt to teach and of good report, but who are not yet ready for full ministerial service, may be accredited as candidates for the ministry and given licensure or approbation to preach.

License to Preach. Formerly, individual pastors introduced whom they thought proper into their pulpits, and churches made long trial of the gifts and fitness of candidates for the pastoral office. In 1705, an unsuccessful effort was made to have none thus employed as candidates, who are not "recommended by a testimonial under the hands of some association." Wise strenuously maintains that this would be an infringement on the rights of the churches. Cotton Mather regards the want of a formal licensing power as a defect, and quotes his Proposals, published twenty years before, but says: "They are not to this day (1726) fully executed."—*Cummings:* Cong. Dict.., License.

What Is a Call to Preach? The call to preach the gospel is to be discerned, first by the earnest conviction of the candidate himself, and secondly by the testimony of the church to his gifts and ability. His first duty is obedience to the inward voice; his second is to assure himself that his inward call is what he believes it to be by the concurrent witness of the local church to which he belongs, and of a body representative of the fellowship of the churches.

Preparation for the Ministry. The first thing for a member of a Congregational church to do, who feels the call of duty or desire to enter the Christian ministry in connection with the Congregational churches, is to make sure that the call is of God. For this he should scan his motives, study the work as a privilege and opportunity and not at all from a commercial standpoint, ask the Lord to make the matter plain to him and seek advice from Christian friends on whose judgment of his adaptation to the demands of the ministry he can largely rely. If he expects to be a pastor and to preach for a lifetime, he should lay solid foundation of Bible and other study in a theological seminary or elsewhere, and learn how to approach men and women and children by an apprenticeship to some mission work. When his preliminary preparation has been thus completed, he should seek an approbation to preach

from a body of ministers or churches, as may be the custom in his locality. If, as sometimes happens, delay and fuller preparation are counseled, he should take the advice meekly and act upon it, sure that it is meant only for his good and greater usefulness. If his request is granted and he is given this introduction to the churches, he goes out strengthened in his own spirit and in his position.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 85.

What Is Licensure to Preach? Licensure to preach is a form of approbation granted to men who are either candidates for the gospel ministry, or who, without present intention to seek ordination, give evidence of gifts which in the judgment of the church ought to be exercised in the preaching of the gospel.

Licentiates Not Ministers. Licentiates are not ministers, but laymen approbated to preach the gospel as candidates for ordination to the ministry. This approbation is given by associations either of churches or of ministers.—*Ross:* Pocket Manual, p. 69.

May a Local Church License a Preacher? A local church may license a preacher for work within its own parish. A church which is maintaining a mission, or a preaching appointment in a school house within the bounds of its own parish, may elect one of its own members as preacher in that mission or settlement and renew the license from time to time at its pleasure, unless otherwise specified. The period of such license terminates at the date fixed by the church and the character of the service to be rendered cannot exceed in its functions the authority of the licentiate. Such a man has no standing outside of his own church and parish, except that of a Christian layman.

What Body Should Issue License to Preach? Associations of ministers and churches are in all ordinary cases the proper bodies to issue certificates of licensure. A licentiate should be under the care of a standing body representative both of the churches and the ministry.

Dr. Dexter, who strongly objected to the term licensure, and urged the better term of approbation to preach, passed very lightly over the matter of candidacy for the ministry, and even Dr. Ross deals with it quite incidentally. There really was no orderly place for licensure in the usage of

that part of our denomination which followed Dexter in regarding associations as mere voluntary clubs, yet permitted that "for convenience sake, they have gradually come to be the depositories of a *quasi* power, which when suitably managed is of most beneficent character and influence," so that the churches "have tacitly agreed that it is wise that candidates for their pulpits shall present themselves for examination to some association of ministers, whose certificate of approval becomes thereafter their sufficient commendation to the churches." (Handbook, p. 123.)

Our denominational usage cannot rest with such a theory of a licentiate as bearing only the unofficial letter of what Dr. Dexter insisted was but "a voluntary club" (Handbook, p. 123). Dr. Dexter's books said as little as possible about the place of licentiates; and even Ross, in his larger work, devotes to the subject only a part of a sentence (Church-Kingdom, p. 226). Dr. George M. Boynton felt the inadequacy of this view of the matter, but did not get far beyond it. In his theory, the local church

looked over its own membership first to see if there was one among them fitted by nature and by grace to lead and teach the rest. In later days, men have been prepared for the sacred office by years of study and have sought to enter the work. They have appeared as applicants, or at least as those who stood ready to be called into this relation to some particular church. It was desirable that they should have not only the approval of their teachers but also of some body of men fitted to pass upon the results of this teaching and upon their general qualifications for the special duties of their spiritual office.—The Congregational Way, p. 82.

Qualifications of Licentiates. It is expedient that they who enter on the work of preaching the gospel be not only qualified for communion of saints, but also, that, except in cases extraordinary, they give proof of their gifts and fitness for the said work unto the pastors of churches, of known abilities to discern and judge of their qualifications, that they may be sent forth with solemn approbation and prayer, which we judge needful, that no doubt may remain concerning their being called unto the work; and for preventing (so much as in us lieth) ignorant and rash intruders.—Saybrook Platform, 1708, ii, 7.

Varying Usage. The usage in the West and in certain parts of New England is that this approbation to preach is given by an ecclesiastical body, that is, one composed of representatives of the churches. This is usually done on the recommendation of a strong committee, a majority of whom at least are ministers, which con-

ducts the examination and reports to the conference of churches. This body will usually sustain the recommendation. In New England this certification is most often given by a body of ministers.

Letters of commendation from experienced pastors which a young minister would naturally take when going among the churches as a candidate, gradually assumed the form and authority of credentials, till, in 1790, the convention of Congregational ministers virtually made them necessary by recommending that only those bearing such papers from clerical bodies be admitted to the pulpits. Thus the business of testing the qualifications of a young man for the ministry silently and gradually passed from the churches to the clergy.

Such credentials are merely intended to express approbation of those who give them; and no Congregational association claims, or even can rightfully claim, the authority implied in the word license, which in later years has inadvertently crept into our association nomenclature.—*Joseph S. Clark:* Historical Sketch of Congregational Churches in Massachusetts, p. 288.

Associations of Ministers. Such a body [of ministers, not of churches] is perhaps best fitted to pass upon the qualifications of those seeking this work. They are themselves men who have received the education which they seek in the applicants, and it is presumed that they are men whose hearts the grace of God has fitted for their own work. This approbation given by either body should be an intelligent one, and this introduction to the churches should be so guarded and discriminating as to be of real value. That it is only introductory is shown by the fact that it is for a limited time and is rarely, if ever, given as a permanent endorsement or reference. A careless presentation of men as candidates for the sacred office is fraught with evils.—*Boynton:* The Congregational Way, pp. 82-83.

May Bodies of Ministers License? In certain New England states where there are Associations of churches and independent associations of ministers, it has long been the custom to permit the association of ministers to license candidates for the ministry. It is not desirable that this method be extended beyond its present territorial limits. In the interests of unity and good order it would be better if even in those cases the association of ministers were to act as an examining committee for the Association of ministers and churches, and the result of the examination were reported for approval and the public act of licensure performed by the Association of churches.

May Theological Seminaries Issue Licenses? Theological seminaries have no authority to issue licenses to preach. For a time there was a custom of issuing what are

known as "seminary licenses." Commonly theological students are not licensed before their middle year, but often they preach during their first long vacation. It is entirely fitting that they should bear a credential from the institution in which they are pursuing their studies, but such a credential should bear no semblance to a license. It should be strictly limited in time and in no case exceed six months. It should be recognized as merely a personal letter of introduction from the faculty of the seminary and a document wholly destitute of ecclesiastical authority.

The National Council has definitely spoken adversely on the matter of so-called seminary licenses (Minutes of Council of 1904, p. 557).

Is a Diploma a Substitute for Examination? Candidates for the ministry should submit evidences of their scholarship, and particularly of their theological studies, but no diploma or certificate should be accepted as a substitute for thorough examination on the part of the churches themselves, through their accredited representatives.

Should Licensure Be Permanent? Approbation to preach should not be unlimited as to time, and may be limited also as to place. It is not in the interests of good order that licensure should be indefinite. One year is ordinarily the limit; two years should be the extreme limit; but licenses may be renewed from time to time and as many times as are necessary. An exception to the rule might be made in the case of the lay-preacher who had given satisfactory proof of his ability, and who had no intention of becoming an ordained minister; but even in that case it would be better and more orderly for the license to be renewed as often as once in two years.

May an Association License a Lay-Preacher? An Association may license a lay-preacher. Where it is proposed that his service extend beyond the bounds of his own parish, it is desirable that his approbation be certified by the Association to which his own church belongs. No lay-preacher should be licensed by an Association except

on the request and recommendation of the church of which he is a member.

May Men Be Licensed Without Intent to Be Ordained? It is entirely suitable that men should be licensed to preach who have no present intention of being ordained or of entering the work of the ministry, or whose gifts and opportunities for usefulness are such that they ought to preach the gospel only in certain places or under certain conditions. The church ought to make larger use of lay-preachers. A larger number of men than is now employed might profitably be commissioned to preach in missions, school houses, and places of assembly remote from houses of worship. A consecrated layman having gifts which he is willing and disposed to exercise in this manner should receive in some formal way the approbation of the church.

How Shall a Candidate for the Ministry Prepare Himself for Licensure? A man believing himself to have a call to preach the gospel should first consult with his own pastor, or if the church of which he is a member be without a pastor, then with some other wise and experienced minister of the gospel, who should advise him with reference to his preparation. After meditation and prayer and diligent inquiry into his own motives and qualifications, and the pursuit of such studies as will fitly prepare him for his great work, he should apply to the Association to which his church belongs, for approbation to preach the gospel. He should submit a statement setting forth,—

(a) His full name and address.

(b) His age and present occupation.

(c) The date and place of his first church membership and of all succeeding church memberships.

(d) The name of his present pastor, and the names of his teachers, or of others who will vouch for his Christian character and ability to preach.

(e) A statement of his experience in Christian work.

(f) The grounds on which he is moved to prepare for the Christian ministry.

What Constitutes Examination for Licensure? A candidate for licensure should be thoroughly examined in,—

(a) His Christian experience and call to the ministry.

(b) The nature and content of the books of the Bible.

(c) The doctrines of the Christian Church.

(d) Church History.

(e) The ability to prepare and deliver sermons, including the rules of composition, rhetoric and logic.

(f) Ethics, moral philosophy, the evidences of Christianity, and religious pedagogy.

(g) Church polity, including the history, doctrines and usage of the Congregational churches.

(h) His knowledge of the missionary organizations and work of the Christian churches, and particularly of the Congregational churches.

In case a candidate exhibits lack of thorough training in any of these subjects, his license may be withheld, or, if granted, its renewal may be conditional upon his pursuing these subjects, or any of them, to the full satisfaction of the Association.

Are Licentiates Members of the Association? Licentiates are not ministerial members of their Association, but are under the care of said Association as candidates for the ministry. Any candidate for the ministry who has been licensed by an Association, in terminating that relationship either by transfer, or ordination, or by change of his life plan, should notify the Association by which he has been licensed and secure an orderly termination of his relations to it.

No licentiate can properly be under the care of two Associations at once, nor is it orderly for him to seek relations with one Association until he has terminated his relations with another, even though the period of his licensure in the first may have expired. In case he has been licensed for one year by one Association, and at the close of that year, having removed, seeks licensure from another Asso-

ciation, the Association granting the original license should have suitable notification of the change, and signify its consent thereto.

May Licentiates Be Transferred to Other Associations? A candidate for the ministry to whom approbation to preach has been granted by one Association, and who during the period of his licensure removes to another Association for any good reason, may be granted a letter of transfer from one Association to the other. Any Association receiving a licentiate from another Association should notify the Association from which he is received, of his reception.

May Licentiates Be Received from Other Denominations? A licentiate may be received from another denomination, and his credentials given such weight as may be due to them, but all relations with the former denomination should be terminated in an orderly manner, and the Association may make such further examination as shall fully satisfy it of the candidate's character, ability, and fitness.

May Licentiates Administer the Ordinances? A church has a right to authorize one of its officers or members, or a licentiate serving as its stated supply, to administer the sacraments. In some isolated communities it may be best that churches should exercise this right. In some frontier states it has been customary for Associations to authorize licentiates to administer the sacraments during the period of their licensure. It may be expedient in some very remote communities that this be continued. But in general it is to be discouraged as subversive of good order. The judgment of the churches would appear to be increasingly against it, and the reasons which formerly were supposed to require it grow less cogent with the progress of the settlement of the country.

May Licentiates Solemnize Marriages? In a few states Congregational licentiates are permitted to solemnize marriages, but most states forbid this, some of them under penalty of fine or imprisonment.

The Illinois Law. In answer to the question whether a licentiate may solemnize marriages, I beg to say that the statute of the State of Illinois provides:

"Marriages may be celebrated by a minister of the gospel in regular standing in the church or society to which he belongs." The "regular standing" here referred to is "ministerial standing"—not regular standing as a member of the church. This law, therefore, means exactly the same as though it read:

"Marriages may be celebrated by a minister of the gospel in regular *ministerial* standing in the church or society to which he belongs."

There should be no confusion as to what the State has done and what the Church may do under this law. The State has ordained that marriages may be celebrated by a minister in regular ministerial standing. It remains for the Church to determine the ministerial standing of each person concerned. The Church may determine whether Mr. A is a minister in regular standing, but it cannot enlarge or diminish his powers in the matter of celebrating marriages. The State has, by statute, provided that if Mr. A be a minister in regular standing he shall have this prerogative, and the Church cannot say that he shall not have it. On the contrary, it is only the minister in regular standing upon whom the State has conferred this authority, and the Church cannot say that it will confer this power upon any other person. Since the State has not so provided, it is perfectly manifest that the Church cannot say that its deacons or elders, or other officials, may exercise this power. The sole function of the Church, therefore, is to determine who are ministers in regular ministerial standing. If the Church, through its proper official legislative body, should pass a rule, in substance, that licentiates are to be deemed as ministers in regular standing, then that class of persons would at once, under the statutes of the State, be invested with authority to celebrate marriages. On the contrary, if the Church refuses or neglects to give licentiates regular standing as ministers of the denomination, then it cannot confer upon them the power to celebrate marriages. The above relates to the power of the Church itself, acting through its representative legislative bodies.

The question may still remain, what is meant by "the church" as that term is used in the statute, where it is said that the minister shall be in regular standing "in the church or society to which he belongs." Does the word church here used mean the denomination, or does it mean the local individual church? I think it clearly means the denomination, as, for example, the Congregational Church, or the Presbyterian Church—and does not mean, for example, the New England Congregational Church, or the Ravenswood Presbyterian Church. I assume, therefore, that the Congregational Conference of Illinois represents the Congregational churches of the State. In its Constitution I find no direct reference to this matter. The effect of this would be to leave to the district associations control over the subject matter. The Constitution of the Chicago Association, in art. viii, contains this:

"The Association insists upon ordination by a representative body as essential to ministerial standing, and will recognize the credentials only of ministers who have been properly ordained."

We have here, by action of the Chicago Association, a direct denial of ministerial standing to persons who have not been ordained. Licentiates, for lack of ordination, could not have ministerial standing under this law of the Chicago Congregational Association.—*Hon. George A. Dupuy*, in legal opinion on right of licentiates to solemnize marriage in Illinois.

May a License Be Terminated? A license to preach may be terminated by the body which issued it. No trial is necessary, but a fair hearing should be given. Licensure to preach is not ordination, and its revocation is not deposition from the ministry. Inasmuch as licenses to preach are almost invariably limited in time to one or two years, it is rarely necessary to revoke them. If within the period of the licensure the candidate proves unworthy, it is usually sufficient to refuse to renew the license. But in a flagrant case, the termination of the license before its expiration would be justified as a protection to the churches.

XIV. THE CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRY

What Is a Christian Minister? A Christian minister is a member of the church, who, having been called of God and recognized by the church, is consecrated by an official act of ordination to the work of the ministry.

The Ministry and the Laity. This ministerial function is not exclusive. It does not shut out the general body of believers from active participation in church worship. No line of separation is drawn between the ministry and the laity, as between the priesthood and the people. As in the synagogues every adult male Jew could take part in the services, so in the primitive churches laymen could take part in the worship (I Cor. 14: 31). The function of teaching or preaching, by the Acts, the Epistles, and the Apostolical Constitutions, was open to laymen. In this respect all are priests, to offer spiritual sacrifices (I Peter 2: 5). The ministry is a function of the church-kingdom common to all its members, yet specifically manifested in the superior fitness of some.—*Ross:* Church Kingdom, p. 135.

What Is the Work of the Ministry? The work of the Christian ministry is the preaching of the gospel, the administration of the sacraments, religious instruction, and the oversight and direction of the work of the church according to the principles of the New Testament and the usage of the denomination. We cannot wholly agree with Mr. Heermance, whose theory of the ministry as a position of service is correct in its positive aspects but inadequate in its negative implications.

An Inadequate View. A minister in a Christian church is simply its servant (the term hired man we approve not) and derives all the powers he possesses from the church which calls him for service.—*Heermance:* Democracy in the Church, p. 141.

Ministerial Leadership. In our polity, then, the ministry is greater than the pastorate. I like Dr. Ross' putting of it as a function in the Church-Kingdom. It is an order or range of service in the Kingdom and the church. It is not outside the church, and we rightly hold our ministers to church-membership. It is not above the church, not a hierarchy with governing power over the churches. It is only by way of the pastorate that it becomes official in the churches. A minister must be a pastor or be invited to perform pastoral service in order to get the office and opportunity of leadership in any church. The ministry, as distinguished from the pastorate, is to be found not merely in the churches, but in and among them in a pervasive sense. It belongs to the

churches in common, to the Church Catholic. It is a service to the church at large, ready to define itself upon invitation into a pastorate of any local church at any time. This distinction discloses the safety enjoyed by every Congregational church with reference to the body of men called the ministry. No one of these men, nor all of them combined, can enter the field of any local church for the purpose, or by the power of any official action, save upon that church's invitation and for the term of that church's pleasure.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, pp. 64-65.

What Is a Congregational Minister? A Congregational minister is a member of a local Congregational church who has been set apart by an act of ordination, and who is in good and regular standing in a Congregational Association as a minister of the gospel.

The Ministry as a Business. If this matter of the church and her leaders is a business matter, it is spiritual business. It is engaged with God upon the spirit of man. The ministry is a vocation. The Church recognizes the divine call and adjusts her call to that. The Church cannot take pleasure in that easy running in and out of the ministry of which we see lamentably much today. It is not a business or profession to be lightly assumed with a calculating eye and presently to be discarded as unprosperous. It is the highest of vocations, to be entered with a lifelong purpose and uncalculating devotion. The Church demands the entire life of her ministers, their undivided attention and their unswerving purpose unto death; and quality of ministerial work is clearly seen to be in direct proportion to such unreserved and dateless consecration. With less than this churches often put up, but the Church is never satisfied. Really providential interruptions are understood; but the Church's conception of the sacred calling stands at the ideal height, and the Church's demands upon her ministers abate nothing from the man's total gift of himself and all that he hath.—*Nash:* Congregational Administration, pp. 54, 55.

How May One Enter the Congregational Ministry? Entrance to the Congregational ministry is attained by the following steps:

(a) Membership in a Congregational church.

(b) Licensure by a Congregational Association, or by some ecclesiastical body representative of the denomination from which the candidate comes into the Congregational fellowship. In rare cases licensure may be dispensed with, but this should be the exception, and for important reasons well weighed and considered.

(c) Ordination by a Congregational Association, or by a Council of Congregational churches regularly called, or

by some other branch of the Christian church with which the Congregational churches are in fellowship.

(d) Membership in a Congregational Association.

In the official statement by the National Council and other bodies, of the conditions of ministerial standing, no mention is made of licensure, as that is taken for granted. It should be mentioned, however, in a statement such as this of the orderly method of becoming a Congregational minister. The National Council of 1886, in Chicago, following lines laid down in the first meeting in 1871, adopted the following resolutions:

Resolved, (1) That standing in the Congregational ministry is acquired by the fulfillment of these three conditions: namely, (1) membership in a Congregational church; (2) ordination to the Christian ministry; and (3) reception as an ordained minister into the fellowship of the Congregational churches, in accordance with the usage of the state or territorial organization of churches in which the applicant may reside; and such standing is to be continued in accordance with these usages, it being understood that a *pro re nata* council is the ultimate resort in all cases in question.

Resolved, (2) That all Congregational ministers in good standing in their respective states, who have been installed by council, or who have been regularly called to the pastorate by the specific vote of some church, have formally accepted such position, and have been recognized as such by some definite act of the church, should be enrolled as pastors; and we advise that all our denominational statistics, and direct that, so far as possible, our Year-Book, conform to this principle.

What Is Ordination? Ordination is the official act of the churches in fellowship, setting apart a member of the church to a designated form of service. Ordination is commonly applied, and in Congregationalism almost wholly limited, to the work of the ministry. But the term is applicable to other offices, particularly to the office of deacon.

Ordination. This ordination we account nothing else but the solemn putting of a man into his place and office in the church, whereunto he had right before by election; being like the installing of a magistrate in the commonwealth.—*Cambridge Platform*, ix, 2.

Ordination a Recognition of the Call of God. The recognition of the ministry is made in ordination, which is a formal inquiry and setting apart to the work. The inquiry respects the qualifications, and consequent fitness or unfitness, of the candidate, as called of God for the ministry; and the setting apart is an ecclesiastical act

or ceremony formally recognizing him as called of God to be a minister.—*Ross:* Church Kingdom, p. 150.

It is agreed by all that the primary and constitutive act for establishing the pastorate is that choice of the body of believers which summons the person chosen to its leadership in Christian teaching and work. To this must, of course, be added the pastor's acceptance of the choice of the church. "Mutual election," says Increase Mather, in his sermon at the ordination of Mr. Appleton, "is that which doth essentiate the relation of a pastor to this or that particular church." Ordination is, therefore, the formal act confessing and ratifying this choice.—*Ladd:* Polity, p. 227.

We are therefore brought again to the conclusion that ordination gave, and still gives, ministerial authority and not power—authority to use gifts or powers for the benefit of the church, as its recognized office-bearers, but not itself conferring them. Richard Hooker indeed has said, that "No man's gift or qualities can make him a minister in holy things, unless ordination do give him power." But gifts and qualities do give power: what they do not give is authority to minister in the congregation, which authority ordination supplies.—*Jacob:* Ecclesiastical Polity, p. 119.

Authority from Below? When the question is put: "Must ministerial character be in all cases conferred from above, or may it sometimes, and with equal validity, be evolved from below?" it appears to me that a fallacy lurks in the antithesis. "From below" is used in the sense "from the membership of the church," and the inference suggested by the contrast is that what comes "from below"—i. e., from the membership of the church—cannot come "from above"—i. e., cannot be of divine origin, warrant and authority. Why not? May the Holy Spirit not use the membership of the church as his instrument? Is there no real abiding presence of Christ among his people? Is not this promised Presence something which belongs to the sphere of God, and may it not be the source of an authority which is "from above."—*Lindsay:* The Church and the Ministry, p. 9.

Power of Congregation. A Church Congregation is the first subject of the keys. Each Congregation compleatly constituted if all the Officers hath sufficient power in herself, to exercise the power of the keyes, and all Church Discipline, in all the censures thereof.

Ordination is not election. There ought to be no ordination of a Minister at large, Namely, such as should make him Pastour without a People.

The election of the people hath an instrumentall causall vertue under Christ, to give an outward call unto an Officer.

Ordination is only a solemn installing of an Officer into the Office, unto which he was formerly called.—*Thos. Hooker:* Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline, London, 1648.

Ordination. Our fathers reckoned ordination not to be essential unto the vocation of a minister, any more than coronation to the being of a king; but that it is only a consequent and convenient adjunct of his vocation, and a solemn acknowledgment of it, with

a useful and proper benediction of him in it.—*Cotton Mather:* Magnalia, Vol. III, pp. 242-243.

It is plain that ordination presupposes an office constituted; does not constitute. Therefore it is not an act of power, but of order.—*Thomas Hooker:* Right and Power of Ordination.

Ordination we account nothing else but the solemnly putting a man into his place and office in the Church, whereto he had right before by his election; being like the installing of a magistrate in the commonwealth.—*Cambridge Platform,* ix, 2, 4.

And ordination of ministers is no more than swearing them to be faithful in that office. Their being furnished with grace and gifts for it is the most essential thing in the affair.—*Isaac Backus:* Baptist, Hist. N. E. Churches, p. 3, Phil. ed., 1853.

The Church, the Christian society, existed in those faithful followers, even from the beginning, and will doubtless last unto the end. But even for years after the Lord's departure such a society existed without a separate order of clergy.—*Stanley:* Christ. Institutions, p. 179.

May a Local Church Ordain? In early Congregationalism it was held that the local church had authority to ordain its own minister. Such ordination is no longer valid. The right of ordination passed from the local church to councils of churches, and has now passed also to Associations, as permanent ordaining bodies.

Power of Ordination. It is the practice to call in the aid of other churches; but it is not lawful nor convenient to call in such assistance by way of authority or power of ministers, or of other churches.—*Richard Mather:* Ch. Govt., p. 41.

Ordination is a work of church power. The power of the keys is a liberty purchased to the church by the blood of Christ, and should not be parted with at a less price. On what ground shall presbyters censure a brother that is a member of another church? —*John Cotton:* Way of the Churches, 1.

All jurisdiction should be confined to particular churches, in whose hands our Saviour hath left it. Nor may any particular churches deprive themselves of this power; for, in so doing, they would deprive themselves of a great trust. For, unless they have and keep this jurisdiction within themselves, they cannot faithfully discharge various other duties which are required of them by Jesus Christ, their lawgiver. The powers and privileges of particular churches are sacred things, by no means to be slighted and undervalued, nor to be left to the mercy of any classes, councils, synods, or general meetings.—*Samuel Mather:.* Apology, p. 20.

Ordination by Church. People have a right to choose their own officers, and then install them into office. The right is primarily and solely in the church; and when ministers ordain, it is because they are invited and appointed by the church to do it.—*Emmons:* Platform of Eccl. Govt.

Even Dr. Ross Held to Local Ordination. The local churches

are the only organs of the Spirit provided for this work of ordination. The church-kingdom chiefly manifests itself in and through them. They are the normal repositories of ecclesiastical power, and the only bodies on which such power was conferred for all time. They are chiefly affected by the ministry, and have consequently the highest reasons for keeping out of the ministry all whom the Lord has not qualified and called. Their conceded independence involves the right and power of ordination.—Church Kingdom, p. 153.

Ordination to the Unitarian ministry is theoretically by the local church, and the usage of that communion as set forth in the Unitarian Manual calls for the dissolution of the council after the vote approving the ordination. But not only is the right hand of fellowship extended by a member of the council, but it is definitely provided that the ordaining prayer should be offered by a minister in good standing.

Calling a Pastor. The clerk of the parish may then read the record of the meeting at which the action calling the pastor elect was taken, the letter to the pastor elect containing the call, and his letter of acceptance, after which the candidate for ordination may be invited to make such statement as shall seem to him fitting regarding his education and professional equipment and his purpose of work and spirit of service. Then may be presented the formal motion for proceeding to the service of ordination, which may in substance be as follows:

Voted, That this council approves the action of the .... church in calling the Rev. .... to be its minister, and hereby appoints the Rev. .... to extend the right hand of fellowship at the service of ordination.

After the passing of this vote, the council shall be dissolved. The moderator of the council may introduce the public service of ordination by an announcement of this action on the part of the council.

The service of ordination has its natural focus of significance in the prayer of ordination, and this should therefore be assigned always to a minister whose standing in the Unitarian fellowship and dignity of personal character befit the responsibility of the ordaining function. The right hand of fellowship is in ordination extended in behalf of the Christian ministry and the Unitarian fellowship; and the minister extending it should be, therefore, himself in full fellowship and in active work of the ministry, and his words should be of simple welcome and congratulation.—Unitarian Handbook, pp. 31-32.

All these eminent authorities were bound by the tradition that the local church must be the ordaining power. Dr. Quint clearly saw the inadequacy of this usage.

Dr. Quint's Affirmation. It is manifest that no church can rightly assume to do, without consultation, what may affect the character and work of the churches in general.—*A. H. Quint* in Dunning's Congregationalists, p. 494.

President Nash has clearly set forth what is now the accepted conception of the Congregational ministry. If a minister is to be ordained to a wider ministry than the pastorate of a local church, the churches as a body have an interest in his ordination; and the attempt of a local church to create ministerial character for the whole denomination would be a usurpation incompatible with the larger interpretation of the ministry which has become inevitable in Congregationalism.

A Minister Is Everywhere a Minister. A pastor doth Preach as a Minister, and Bless in the name of the Lord, as a Minister of His, wherever he may be occasionally called thereto.—*Increase Mather:* The Judgment of Several Eminent Divines, Boston, 1693, p. 2.

A Minister in the Church Universal. A Minister chosen and set over one Society, is to looke unto his people committed to his charge, and feed the flock over which the Lord hath made him overseer, but he is a Minister in the Church Universall, for as the Church is one, so is the Ministry one, of which every minister (sound or Orthodox) doth hold his part, and though he be minister over that flock onely which he is to attend, yet he is a Minister in the Universal Church. The function or power of exercising that Function in the Abstract, must be distinguished from the power of exercising it, concretely, according to the divers circumstances of places. The first belongeth to a Minister everywhere in the church, the latter is proper to the place and people where he doth minister. The lawful use of his power is limited to that congregation ordinarily. The power itself is not so limited and bounded. In Ordination, Presbyters are not restrained to one or other certaine place, as if they were to be deemed Ministers there onely, though they be set over a certain people.—*John Davenport:* Answer to the Elders, 1643.

Pastoral Theory Inadequate. This pastoral theory became almost at once in early New England too small to cover the facts. The churches held the ministry in higher esteem and administered it upon a larger view. Ordination became a social act, performed by representatives of the churches. The ordained man was considered a minister beyond the bounds of his own parish, and his official acts properly ministerial wherever performed. In 1812 the General Conference of Connecticut asserted that the ordained man remained amenable to discipline when out of a pastorate. Repeated ordination to the ministry gave way to installation into the pastorate, already a different matter in Congregational eyes. Dismissal from a pastorate ceased to be deposition from the min-

istry. The close of the last pastorate of a lifetime was not *ipso facto* departure from the ministry.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, pp. 62-63.

Responsible to the Welfare of All. That every particular congregation is absolute and independent, and not responsible to any higher power, is too lordly a principle: it is too ambitious a thing for every small congregation to arrogate such an uncontrolable power as to be accountable to none on earth. This is neither a probable way for the peace of the churches nor for the safety of church members.—*Solomon Stoddard:* The Doctrine of Instituted Churches, 1700, p. 27.

Is Lay Ordination Valid? Lay ordination is not valid in modern Congregationalism. The local church can create its own ministry, can license one of its members to preach and administer the ordinances, but for admission to the general ministry of the Congregational churches there must be ordination by the laying on of hands by the presbytery.

It is to be noted that even in the strictest days of Puritan rule it was maintained by many that while the authority for ordination resides in the local church, the act of ordination must be performed by the ministry. Even John Robinson contended for this, so that while sometimes the early New England churches availed themselves of the right to ordain, they even then were accustomed to send letters missive to individual ministers asking them to perform the act of ordination.

Congregational churches have always held that the church creates its ministry, and not the ministry the church. They have never admitted the right of a local church to create a ministry which should have ministerial standing in all the churches. The ordination of a minister is an event of more than local significance and involves a special character not to be ordinarily transmitted through the act of laymen alone. There were a few instances in early New England history where a church set apart a minister by its own act, but this was not looked upon as regular. The most notable instance is that of the founding of the church in Woburn, as described by Captain Johnson, who himself participated in the event.

The Woburn Case. The 22. of the 9. moneth following Mr.

Thomas Carter was ordained Pastor, in presence of the like Assembly. After he had exercised in preaching and prayer the greater part of the day, two persons in the name of the Church laid their hands upon his head, and said, We ordain thee Thomas Carter to be Pastor unto this Church of Christ; then one of the Elders Priest (Present), being desired of the Church, continued in prayer unto the Lord for His more especial assistance of this His servant in His work, being a charge of such weighty importance, as is the glory of God and salvation of souls, that the very thought would make a man to tremble in the sense of His own inability to the Work.—*Johnson:* Wonder-Working Providence, p. 217.

This course was strongly objected to at the time, as is evidenced in Winthrop's Journal:

The village at the end of Charlestown was called Woburn, where they had gathered a church, and this day Mr. Carter was ordained their pastor with the assistance of the elders of other churches. Some difference there was about his ordination; some advised, in regard they had no elder of their own, nor any members very fit to solemnize such an ordinance, they would desire some of the elders of the other churches to have performed it; but others supposing it might be an occasion of introducing a dependency of churches, etc., and so a presbytery, would not allow it. So it was performed by one of their own members, but not so well and orderly as it ought.—p. 88.

There were several like instances in New England in the early days, but Cotton Mather, in his "Magnalia," declares the custom of ordination other than by the presbytery as having in his time gone into disuse. It has never returned, and will not return, to use in Congregationalism. The local church chooses its minister, but a minister when ordained has a relation to all the churches and to the ministry at large. Lay ordination is not, and for two hundred years has not been, regular in Congregationalism.

Lay Ordination in Earlier Usage. In such churches where there are no elders, imposition of hands may be performed by some of the brethren orderly chosen by the church thereunto. For if the people may elect officers, which is the greater, and wherein the substance of the office consists, they may much more (occasion and need so requiring) impose hands in ordination, which is less, and but the accomplishment of the other.

Nevertheless, in such churches where there are no elders, and the church so desire, we see not why imposition of hands may not be performed by the elders of other churches. Ordinary officers laid hands upon the officers of many churches: the presbytery at Ephesus laid hands upon Timothy, an evangelist; the presbytery at Antioch laid hands upon Paul and Barnabas.—Cambridge Platform, ix, 4, 5.

Besides, there is something very absurd in the supposition, that ordained ministers have the sole right of ordaining others. Upon this supposition, let a particular church be ever so pure and orthodox, and choose an able and orthodox preacher to settle with them, they cannot have him for their pastor unless ministers are pleased to ordain him. This throws all the churches into the hands of ministers; and can we suppose that Christ meant to deprive churches of their inherent right to choose and install their own officers?—*Emmons:* Platform Eccl. Govt., iii, 3.

Must Ministers Be Ordained by Ministers? Whereas they tie the Ordination of everie Minister, as it were, vnto the girdle of other ministers—that is, to laie a greater bondage vpon ye churches than they are able to bear. For admitt there be onlie one church in a nation, and they want a pastour: must they seeke over Sea and Lande to gett a minister ordained by other ministers? And is it not a dishonour to Jesus Christ the head of everie congregation which is his bodie: to say that his bodie together with the head is not able to be sustained and preserved in itself?—*Harrison,* Colleague of Robert Browne at Middlebury, 1583.

Ordination by Ministers. The Scriptures in plain terms attribute the act of ordination to a presbytery, i. e., a company of elders.—*Goodwin:* Ch. Govt., p. 54.

Divergence of Earlier Authorities. The views of the so-called authorities have differed upon this whole subject, from that of President Stiles, who says, "It was a mistaken notion of our fathers that the power of ordination was in the church by the elders," to that of Davenport, who declares, "Their ordination of officers . . . is an act of the power of the keys residing in them"; from that of Ainsworth, who maintains, "That ministers of one particular church should ordain elders for another church is more unorderly than when every church ordaineth them itself," to the opposite opinion of Increase Mather, who supposes lay-ordination valid indeed, but, when elders may be attained, not decent.—*Ladd:* Principles of Church Polity, p. 231.

Is Ordination to Be Performed on Sunday? It may be so performed. It is not customary or advisable that ordination should take place on Sunday where a council is to be convened on that day, but either a council or an Association having conducted an examination upon a week day may set the public service of ordination upon the Sabbath, and appoint members who shall perform the public service in the name of the council or Association. Such persons have no power to modify or add to the instructions of council or Association under which they act.

May a Missionary Society Ordain a Missionary? A missionary society may not ordain a missionary. In the earlier years of the American Board it was the custom of the Prudential Committee to call ordaining councils, but this practice was disapproved and ceased. There were also a few cases in which individual missionaries called councils for their own ordination, but this was highly objectionable. Dr. Anderson, Secretary of the American Board, in 1856, thus described the custom of the Board:

> At first, and for some time, the Prudential Committee were accustomed to call the ordaining council. But, for many years past, the whole matter of ordination has been left with the candidate to arrange with the church to which he belongs, or with some other church to which he sustains a providential relation. The letters missive are issued in the name of the church, inviting sister-churches to come, with their pastors, and ordain the candidate, if they think proper, as a missionary to the heathen. Where circumstances have been peculiar, the candidate has himself sometimes communicated his wishes, by letter, to certain pastors and churches, and asked them to assemble and ordain him, in case they saw no objection.

There might still be an emergency in which a foreign missionary society could call a council for the ordination of a missionary. Such a case would be the ordination of the son of foreign missionary parents, whose own birth and church membership were in a foreign land, and who, returning to this country, desired ordination before his return. In such a case the American Board, representing the Congregational fellowship of churches in foreign lands, might call a council, but under no ordinary circumstances should this be done. The initiative in the matter of ordination should be with the local church. It is to be noted, however, that in the above supposed case, although a missionary society might call a council, the ordination would not be performed by the society, but by the council of churches.

Does Ordination Create the Right to Preach? Ordination does not create the right to preach. That right belongs to every member of the church. Nor does it create the particular and special right involved in a call to the ministry. That right is conferred by the Head of the Church.

But ordination is an official and orderly recognition on the part of the church, guided by the Spirit, of the gift conferred by Christ. It is thus the right of the church to say: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."

Liberty of Prophesying. The apostolical institution did not ordain that a particular individual, and he a stipendiary, should have the sole right of speaking from a higher place, but that each believer in turn be authorized to speak. Women are, however, enjoined to keep silence in the churches.—*John Milton:* Christian Doctrine, ii, 203, 204.

Discreet, faithful, and able men, (though) not yet in the ministry, may preach the gospel and the whole truth of God.—Apology of Engl. Ch. in Amsterdam.

All men have not only the liberty, but are also to desire, that they may prophesy, i. e., speak to the church to edification, which is to be coveted rather than other spiritual gifts.—*Ainsworth:* Communion of Saints, in Hanbury, i, 281.

We believe that the sober, discreet, orderly, and well-governed exercise of expounding and applying the Holy Scriptures in the congregation, by the apostle called prophesying, and allowed by him to every other understanding member of the church but women, is lawful now, convenient, profitable, yea, sometimes very necessary also in divers respects.—*Jacob:* Confession, Act xviii.

Cotton Mather did not reckon ordination to be essential unto the vocation of a minister, any more than coronation to the being of a king: it is but a convenient adjunct of his vocation, and a solemn acknowledgement of it, with an useful and proper benediction of him in it.—*John Keep:* Congregationalism and Church Action, p. 31.

The Right to Preach. One's right to preach does not depend on the call of a local church, or on ordination, or on regular standing, but on the commission of Christ, the Head and King. How much less then is the ministry an official relation in a local church, as was once held by the New England churches (Cambridge Platform, ch. ix, 7). This narrow view has been supplanted by the better and normal view of the ministry (Boston Platform, Part IV, i, 1). The churches do not create the ministry; they only recognize it. He whom the Master calls is the true minister; but he whom the churches call may be still a layman. The power of the keys is for recognizing the true ministry, and regulating their standing for the good of the churches; but the power to create and silence is not theirs, although generally good order requires acquiescence in their action.—*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, p. 137.

Must Ordination Be to the Pastorate of a Particular Church? In early Congregationalism it was maintained that ordination must invariably be to the pastorate of a designated local church and that his standing as a minister

terminated on his resignation of the pastorate of that church. This is no longer the usage of the denomination, and ceased to be good Congregationalism when installation ceased to be re-ordination.

Ordination Not Inauguration into the Pastorate. Ordination is the ecclesiastical recognition of the ministerial function of the church-kingdom as that function appears in individuals called by Jesus Christ to preach the Word. It is not therefore primarily and fundamentally an inauguration into the pastoral office, as the New England fathers made it, but into the ministry of the Word, The function is wider than the pastoral office; it includes as well all evangelistic and missionary labors; and so ordination is to the ministry, which is as wide in its scope as the wants of the church and the work of Christ.—*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, p. 152.

May an Evangelist Be Ordained? The ordination of an evangelist is a matter calling for more conservative action than the ordination of a foreign missionary. The missionary is still responsible to the churches through the organization which he serves. There are men who have an undoubted call to serve the churches in the capacity of evangelists, but every man so ordained should be considered as in a special sense answerable to the Association of which he is a member, and if he employs his membership in the Association for the mere purpose of having a point of departure and conducts himself as if in no respect answerable to it he should be considered guilty of irregular conduct. From the beginning our churches have felt the need of caution in the ordination of evangelists.

The evangelist should be particularly conscientious in his relations to the local church of which he is a member and to the Association to which that church belongs, otherwise his ministry would become practically irresponsible.

May a Woman Be Ordained? In the early centuries of Congregationalism only men were ordained to the gospel ministry, and this continues to be the general rule among our churches. There are manifest reasons why women should not ordinarily be ordained as ministers of the gospel. We have no law, however, which prevents ordination of a woman under circumstances which clearly indicate her

providential call and usefulness in the Christian ministry. There have been several cases in which women have been ordained.

Women's Rights. Robinson, in his Reply to Bernard, enumerates, among their ecclesiastical rights, making profession of faith and confession of sin; saying amen to the church's prayers; singing psalms vocally; accusing a brother of sin; witnessing an accusation, or defending themselves being accused; and, where no man will, reproving the church rather than it should go on in sin. He holds them debarred from voting and ordinary prophesying (i. e., publicly expounding and exhorting), but not from simple speaking. Ainsworth, in his Reply to Clyfton, says: "And although woman, in regard to her sex, may not speak or teach in the church, yet with other women, and in her private family, she openeth her mouth in wisdom, and the doctrine of grace is on her tongue. Miriam was a guide to the women of Israel, and Priscilla helped to expound the way of God more perfectly to Apollos." Robinson advocates the same in his Letter to the Church in London. The Synod in Boston, in 1637, condemned the proceeding of a public meeting, where some sixty or more were present weekly; and one woman took upon her the whole exercise in a prophetical way. Isaac Chauncy, in his Divine Institution of Congregational Churches, says: "Women may not speak or exercise authority in the church." Eliot, in his Ecclesiastical History of Massachusetts, says Cotton would not consent that his wife should make an open confession of her faith, when she joined the church, considering it as against modesty; but she was examined by the elders.—*Cummings:* Cong. Dict., Women's Rights.

Is Public Service of Ordination Necessary? It was contended by early reformers even in the Episcopal church and generally by Congregationalists that no public act of ordination was necessary, but it was always recognized as appropriate. Private ordination without public recognition they did not count valid, not because the public act of ordination was considered spiritually indispensable, but because it was recognized as an appropriate, dignified, solemn and practically necessary recognition of the right of the church in an act that concerns the whole body of believers.

Is Laying on of Hands Necessary? The imposition of hands in ordination is a time-honored custom which ought by no means to be omitted in the consecration of a minister of the gospel. Even if, as many of the early Congregationalists contended, the original form of the act was the

stretching out or the uplifting of the hand in voting, the form from New Testament times onward has been well established and for generations has been practically universal. A minister who had conscientious scruples against the receiving of the laying on of hands but whose ordination otherwise was orderly and public and certified by council or Association, could not be declared destitute of ministerial standing; his ordination would be counted as irregular but not invalid.

Laying on of Hands. There is no command that this practice be continued in the churches, but there is a pleasant fitness in it which will secure its continuance to the world's end. And—on the whole—Milton has well rendered the sense of the Bible concerning it, where he says, "as for ordination, what is it, but the laying on of hands, an outward sign or symbol of admission? It creates nothing, it confers nothing; it is the inward calling of God that makes a minister, and his own painful study and diligence that matures and improves his ministerial gifts."—*Dexter:* Congregationalism, p. 141; *Milton:* Prose Works, Bohn's Ed., iii, p. 78.

The way of ordaining officers . . . is, after their election by the suffrage of the church, to set them apart with fasting and prayer, and imposition of the hands of the eldership of the church, though, if there be no imposition of hands, they are rightly constituted ministers of Christ.—Savoy Synod.

Who May Impose Hands? Those who laid hands on Barnabas and Saul, sending them forth as missionaries from the church at Antioch, represented not the ministry but the church (Acts 13: 1-3). The general custom, however, in the Acts of the Apostles was the laying on of hands by the presbytery, that is, by the elders or pastors. The rule in Congregationalism is not that the minister creates the church, but that the church creates its ministry, for the local church having called a council or Association to perform the act of ordination very properly recognizes and indeed must recognize the right of the churches represented in the ministers present to ordain to the ministry by the laying on of hands.

Ordination by the People. If the apostacy be so general that there are not anywhere to be found any true elders, yet then hath the church . . . power to ordain their ministers by the most fit members and means they have.—*Barrowe:* Answer to Gifford in Hanbury, i, 58.

The Confession of the Low Country Exiles, says: Every Christian congregation hath power and commandment to elect and ordain their own ministry.—Confession of Low Country Exiles, art. iii.

That ministers of one particular church should ordain elders for another church is more unorderly than when every church ordaineth them itself.—*Ainsworth:* Reply to Johnson.

Their ordination of officers, by deputing some out of their own body thereunto . . . in a want of officers, is an act of this power of the keys residing in them.—*John Davenport:* Power of Congregational Churches.

Where elders cannot conveniently be borrowed from any other church, imposition of hands may lawfully be performed by some principal men of the congregation, though they be not elders by office.—*Richard Mather:* Answer to Herle.

Is Ordination Valid if Obtained under Fraud? It is, provided the ordaining body possessed the right to ordain, and intended to ordain, but the discovery of the fraud should result in the immediate filing of charges against the minister guilty of the fraud, and in his deposition from the ministry. Until he is deposed, however, all acts performed by him in his ministerial capacity have the same validity as if his ordination had been regular.

Is Ordination Performed by a Packed Council Valid? Whether an ordination is valid when performed by a small council and one manifestly not representative of the churches, is often a difficult question. If the council has been regularly called, and the church calling the council is satisfied and accepts its finding, it is difficult to disprove a valid ordination. But such ordination does not compel an Association to accept the man so ordained as a Congregational minister, nor can he secure ministerial standing without membership in an Association.

Is There a Distinction Between Invalid and Irregular Ordination? There is. An ordination performed by a body possessing no ecclesiastical right to ordain, is invalid. An ordination performed in good faith by a council, of which it might be discovered years afterward that a quorum was lacking, would be irregular; but if upon the strength of it the minister had received membership in an Association and

had continued in good faith to perform the functions of the ministry, the ordination could not be regarded as invalid.

In the case of a Congregational minister coming from another body, whose forms were not wholly like our own, the question once was raised whether a certain minister should be regarded as having been ordained or only licensed. The Association receiving him to membership considered that he had been ordained, and he was received as an ordained minister and has made good proof of his ministry. A more careful inquiry probably would have shown that he should have been regarded as a licentiate and therefore should have been ordained. In his case it cannot be maintained that his ordination was invalid, though it was irregular.

A prominent English Baptist clergyman, who had been ordained by the vote of a local church and without the laying on of hands, was called first to a prominent Baptist church in New York City and after awhile to a large Congregational church upon the Pacific Coast. The council for his installation developed the fact that his ordination had not been in accordance with the forms of our Congregational usage. He was nevertheless installed as pastor and became a full member of the District Association. His ordination must be regarded as irregular, but not by any means invalid.

Are Ministerial Orders Indelible? The doctrine of the indelibility of orders has never found favor in Congregationalism. The Church can confer orders, and by the same authority can revoke them.

Orders. We have no such indelible character imprinted on a minister, that he must needs be so forever, because he once was so. His ministry ceasing, the minister ceaseth also.—*New England Elders:* Neal: History of the Puritans, i, p. 150.

What authority has he to minister to any church, if they will not hear him?—*Allin and Shepard:* in Hanbury, iii, p. 42.

He that is clearly loosed from his office-relation to that church whereof he was a minister, cannot be looked at as an officer, nor perform any act of office in any other church, unless he be again called to office.—Cambridge Platform, ch. ix, sec. 7.

We have no concernment in the figment of an indelible character . . . yet we do not leave the ministry when we go from home.—*John Owen:* in Mather's Magnalia.

Is an Ordinance Valid if the Minister Who Performs It Proves Unworthy? An ordinance administered by a Congregational minister in good standing is not rendered invalid if he prove unworthy. The character of the act is not rendered nugatory by the unworthiness of the man who performs it. We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the glory may be of God and not of men.

An unordained person pretending to an ordination which he has not received cannot perform valid acts as a minister of the gospel, and is liable to fine and imprisonment by the civil courts for marriages attempted to be performed by him.

May Congregational Churches Provide for Limited Ordination? In the case of a man of Christian character and fair ability, but of limited training, called to the pastorate of a mission church which he is qualified to serve although unqualified for the general ministry, an act of limited ordination would be entirely valid. Such ordination is unusual, but there is no good reason why it should not be practiced and made conditional upon a minister's continuing in a certain field and pursuing certain courses of study subject to the direction of his Association. Should he be called to another field, which in the judgment of the Association he ought to accept, he could be transferred with like conditions to the Association in whose bounds he is to labor. Should he make such progress as in the judgment of the Association would warrant his complete recognition as a minister of the gospel, the conditions could be removed.

A certificate of ordination for such a minister might be substantially in the following form:

To the.....Congregational Church in.....
Greeting:

The Council convened by your call in letters missive dated .....19....., has examined Mr. ..... with

reference to his Christian experience, education, and call to preach, and rejoices to find in him an earnest and faithful man, with gifts that in some respects would qualify him for the work of the ministry, but lacking in that degree of preparation which would justify the council in an unlimited ordination. Believing, however, that your call to him is the call of God to preach to this congregation, and administer the sacraments in this place, we hereby ordain him to the gospel ministry, and recommend him to the oversight and fellowship of the ..... Congregational Association, of which your church is a member, to which body he shall present a copy of this certificate, and pursue under its direction such other further studies as it shall require, which we recommend shall extend over not less than three years.

This certificate is limited to one year from its date, and good only within the bounds of this Association, and may be renewed from year to year at the pleasure of the said Association on satisfactory proof that he has met the conditions herein imposed. At the end of each annual examination before said Association, this certificate shall have endorsed upon it such approval and further extension as the said Association shall deem wise; and at the end of not less than three years may be recalled and for it substituted a certificate of ordination without the limitations contained in this certificate.

If before the expiration of this certificate he shall remove from the bounds of this Association, this certificate shall not be valid as a certificate of ordination, but he may receive a certificate or letter of commendation as a candidate for the ministry, with a statement of the progress which he shall then have made toward the removal of the conditions herein contained.

Wishing grace, mercy and peace to you and to him, and exhorting you to assist him in making full proof of his ministry, we are, in Christian fellowship,

For the Council,

.....
Moderator.

.....
Scribe.

.....19.....

Such a plan would have very much to commend it. It would save us from some very unhappy experiences. It might enable us to use some men to whom now we are constrained to refuse ordination.

How May a Minister of Another Denomination Become Congregational? A minister in another denomination may become Congregational by taking successively all of the following steps:

First, by securing an honorable dismission from ecclesiastical relationships with other denominations; secondly, by becoming a member of a local Congregational church;

thirdly, by uniting with a Congregational Association, to whom he must submit full proof of his ministerial standing.

Congregational churches have received some of their ablest and foremost ministers from other denominations, and have shown great hospitality in admitting them *ad eundem* wherever their standing in other evangelical bodies has been co-ordinate with our own. We have had abundant warnings, however, which justify a word of caution about receiving unknown men until all their credentials are in hand and their record has been thoroughly investigated.

Should a Minister Received from Another Denomination Be Re-ordained? A minister received from another denomination bringing with him credentials certifying to his regular ordination and good standing in a denomination whose interpretation of the functions of the ministry accords with that of the Congregational churches, should not be re-ordained; but if he comes from a denomination whose own interpretation of the functions of the ministry does not constitute him a minister of the Church of Christ, he should be re-ordained.

In the case of a minister who has been ordained in a denomination whose doctrinal views are different than those of Congregational churches, but whose theory of the ministry is essentially the same, he should not be re-ordained, but the council or Association should thoroughly satisfy itself of his doctrinal soundness before he is received as a Congregational minister.

Re-ordination. Ministers coming from England were usually re-ordained; but, some of them scrupling, the churches have elected them and embraced them, and so, solemnizing the transaction with fasting and prayer, have enjoyed them to all evangelical intents and purposes, without their being re-ordained at all.—*Cotton Mather:* Magnalia, ii, 209.

May a Congregational Minister Join Another Denomination? A Congregational minister may for good cause unite with another denomination and receive a letter of dismission in good standing and fellowship. Under the plan of union adopted in 1801, Congregational and Presbyterian

ministers have been permitted to pass freely from one denomination to the other, and the same freedom to an extent hardly less is enjoyed between Congregational and certain other denominations.

Is Membership in an Association Necessary to Ministerial Character? Membership in an Association is not essential to ministerial character, but is essential to good standing in the Congregational ministry.

How Is Ministerial Standing Maintained? In order to maintain ministerial standing a Congregational minister must continue membership in a Congregational church and in a Congregational Association, and must continue to maintain good Christian character and be faithful to the work of the ministry.

How Is Ministerial Standing Impaired? Ministerial standing may be impaired:

(a) By the termination of membership in the local church.

(b) By the termination of membership in a Congregational Association.

(c) By any act adjudged either by the local church or by the Association of which he is a member to be inconsistent with his standing as a Christian minister.

The anomaly of ministerial standing residing in Associations of ministers, and not of ministers and churches, is apparent. Dr. George M. Boynton, after noting that in some of the New England states the Association of ministers, an entirely irresponsible body, certifies the list of its members to the Year Book, justly remarks:

> And yet it does not seem right that a minister, who is a member in good standing of a Congregational church, and who has been admitted to the ministry by an ecclesiastical council representing the fellowship of churches, should lose his place on the official record by the action of a professional club or association; and this appears the more so, since there is no higher authority in the states where the ministerial Association is responsible for furnishing the list by which his name can be restored.—Congregational Way, p. 140.

Is There a Distinction Between Ministerial Standing

and the Ministerial Function? There is a difference between ministerial standing and ministerial character. A man who is ordained to the ministry by competent ecclesiastical authority attains to ministerial character by virtue of his ordination, but the question of his ministerial standing still remains to be determined. He may be ordained a Methodist, and by that ordination he has ministerial character among Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and all other Christian bodies who recognize the validity of Methodist ordination, but he has ministerial standing in the Methodist church only. If he becomes pastor of a Congregational church his name is starred or bracketed in the Year Book, for he has no standing as a Congregational minister until he becomes a member of a Congregational Association.

He is quite competent to perform all functions of a valid ministry, to administer the ordinances and to solemnize marriages, and he retains his standing in the Methodist church until he terminates his relationship there and transfers his standing to the Congregational denomination. After he has become a Congregational minister in good standing he loses his standing as a Methodist minister, but does not lose his ministerial character among Methodists. He is still recognized by Methodists in any ministerial act which he may be called upon to perform.

This distinction is important, and somewhat increasingly so, in view of recent developments in our Congregational polity.

It was formerly held that membership in a Congregational Association had nothing to do with ministerial standing, but this contention, long growing into desuetude, became thoroughly obsolete under the ruling of the National Council in 1886. That ruling, which was not legislative, registered effectually the judgment of the denomination that ministerial standing in the Congregational denomination requires three things: First, membership in a Congregational church; second, ordination by a competent ecclesi-

astical authority; third, membership in a Congregational Association.

Under the long since obsolete interpretation of the ministry maintained for generations in New England, that a minister became a minister by action of Council when ordained and installed over a church, and ceased to be a minister when dismissed by a council from the pastorate of the church, ministerial standing and ministerial character were identical. But when Congregationalism extended itself beyond the bounds of New England this theory of the ministry became untenable and the denomination fell into the inconsistent practice of separating ministerial standing and ministerial character by vesting the former in an association and permitting the latter to remain in the council of Churches, a temporary and evanescent body. Deposition from the ministry became possible only by the convening of a new council called for the purpose of considering charges preferred. As a result, there are notable instances of ministers adjudged immoral and expelled from associations who continue to exercise all ministerial functions. The action of the National Council of 1886, in defining ministerial standing, lacked completeness in not also defining ministerial character.

The development of our denominational life in time made it plain that the body responsible for ministerial standing, namely, the Association, must have authority to create ministerial character. The National Council in session at Cleveland in 1907 definitely recognized the validity of ordination by Association. One by one the District Associations are assuming this prerogative, and, either by acting as ordaining bodies or by insisting upon their representation in councils held within their territorial bounds, are guarding the door of entrance to the Congregational ministry. Through the Association the churches are saying that if the Association must assume responsibility for ministers when ordained, the Association must affirm the right to be consulted and on occasion to participate in the act of

ordination itself. Thus it has come about and it has been recognized as good Congregational usage that District Associations confer not merely ministerial standing, but ministerial character.

There is one further inevitable logical corollary, namely, that if a Congregational Association can confer ministerial character it can also terminate it.

A new order of things began with the National Council of 1907. The Chicago Association, in adopting its new constitution, gave frank recognition to this change and wrought into its organic law a stipulation that any minister who then was or might thereafter become a member of that Association held his ministerial standing in that body under the condition that if the Association should expel him he must cease to be a minister of the Gospel. To this position Congregational usage must now speedily adjust itself. A minister suspended by an Association loses for the time being his ministerial standing, but a minister expelled from the Association loses also his ministerial character. He has no authority to administer the sacraments and is liable to prosecution if he solemnizes a marriage. This interpretation is independent of the manner of his ordination, whether by an independent Council of Churches or by an Association, whether within our own fellowship or at the hands of another denomination body. It is the logical outcome of the National Council pronouncement on ministerial standing in 1886.

This inevitable step, recognizing the right of an association to depose an unworthy minister, was taken by the National Council at New Haven in 1915, in its resolutions in response to a memorial from the State Conference of Illinois. These resolutions which were unanimously adopted and have thus become the authoritative rule for the compilation of ministerial names for the Year Book are as follows:

The National Council Resolutions on the Illinois Memorial. Your Committee on Memorials have had placed in their hands for their consideration two memorials from the Illinois Conference. The Memorial designated A has reference to Ministerial Standing

and Character and has regard to the present inadequate definition of the status of ministers from whom fellowship has been withdrawn by District Associations. Your Committee are in entire accord with the purport of this report and the intent of its resolution, and submit the following preamble and resolution, and recommend that they be affirmed by this Council:

"Whereas, The National Council has affirmed that the ministerial standing of an ordained man is completed and constituted only by membership in a District Association or State Conference and is sustained by the maintenance of such membership.

"It Is Therefore Voted, That the loss of such membership for good and sufficient cause is the loss of ministerial standing; that no further action, such as technical deposition, is required for terminating a man's ministerial character, and that one who has this lost ministerial standing and character should no longer be recognized as a minister or employed by our churches, and his name shall not appear in the Year Book."

As germane to the foregoing resolution, and as an essential corollary, your Committee also recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

"That a minister who has been suspended from membership in a District Association or State Conference should not be permitted to exercise the functions of the ministry during the period of his suspension."

May a Congregational Minister Demit His Office? A Congregational minister retiring from the ministry to enter secular business may demit the office of the ministry. The steps in this process are the following:

(1) The resignation of his pastorate, if he be a pastor, together with the orderly termination of said pastorate by council, if he has been installed by council.

(2) A request made in person or by writing to the Association of which he is a member that his membership in said Association terminate and that he be given a certificate that his ministerial standing ceases at his own request and in orderly manner.

(3) A vote of the Association granting him dismission.

The notice of his dismission may be essentially the following form:

The ..... Congregational Association to Rev. ...., Greeting:

Dear Brother: This is to certify that at a regular meeting of ..... Association, held ....., 19....., your request for dismission in order that you might enter into other business than the ministry was duly presented, and you, being at the time in good standing as a member of this body, were at your

own request affectionately dismissed and relieved from further responsibility as a minister of the gospel.

Yours in Christian fellowship,

.....

Registrar.

Should a Demitted Minister Be Re-ordained? A minister who has demitted his ministry and who desires again to preach should not be re-ordained. He should, however, be fully examined by the Association within whose bounds he proposes to labor and for membership in which he applies, giving a full statement of his reasons for withdrawing from the ministry and his desire to return.

For instance, a minister whose health has compelled him to seek other employment with no thought of returning to the ministry may find his health restored in later years; and he, discovering a need of his service in some particular field, may desire to take up again the work of the ministry. He should be required to show that during the period in which he has engaged in secular business he has maintained a reputation not inconsistent with his re-entering the ministry, and that there is a providential call for him now to reassume its duties. The Association, acting on the request of the local church of which he is a member, or that which he is to serve, or both, may reinstate him without re-ordination.

Should Ministers in Secular Business Retain Ministerial Standing? Ministers who enter secular business should not retain ministerial standing. Editing of a religious newspaper or teaching in a Christian school, or acting as secretary or agent of an accredited religious organization, is not to be regarded as a secular employment. But a commercial enterprise should not be permitted to derive any secular advantage from the use of a ministerial title. No minister should use the title, Reverend, upon a letter head or business card employed to promote a secular business; and any minister who does so may properly be disciplined by the Association of which he is a member.

The foregoing principles do not, however, apply to a

minister earning his daily bread by farming or other worthy methods and giving such portion of his time as he is able to work that is distinctly religious. The Association can and should discriminate between the tent-making minister honorably earning his support in order that he may freely give his service to the churches, and the shrewd advertiser laboring for his own commercial gain and using his ministerial title as an advertisement. In the case of the latter person it should not hesitate to request him either to withdraw from secular business and devote his time to the ministry, or to demit his membership in the Association.

What Is the Duty of a Minister Temporarily Out of Ministerial Work? The case of a minister not in active service, but who regards his own withdrawal as temporary and who in the meantime engages in secular pursuits, is often a perplexing one. Such a minister, if he continues to maintain a reputation consistent with ministerial standing, may still continue his membership in the Association and his standing in the ministry. In any business into which he enters he should refrain from the use of the title, Reverend, and should carefully avoid any appearance of using his ministerial office for purposes of traffic, or of bringing the ministry into contempt.

What Is the Status of a Retired Minister? Ministers who have retired from active service by reason of age, infirmity or other honorable cause, retain their ministerial standing. This, however, does not apply to ministers who demit their ministry in order to enter into secular business.

What Is the Status of Unemployed Ministers? Ministers who have not demitted their ministry but are unemployed because no man hired them and who temporarily are engaged in worthy vocations other than the ministry, do not lose their ministerial standing.

Ministers Without Pastoral Charge. Fit men not bearing office in any church, but giving themselves to the work of preaching, have always been recognized among us as ministers of the Word. The ministry, therefore, includes all who are called of God to

preach the gospel and are set apart to that work by ordination.—oston Platform, xviii, i, 1.

May There Be Distinctions in the Congregational Ministry? As the organization of the church life grows more complex it is both suitable and profitable that the work of the ministry should become more specialized. Some ministers are by gifts and training fitted for special work of instruction or administration and may be called by the church as teachers, editors, or home missionary superintendents, and these positions may be properly designated by any suitable term. But each position thus created is an office, not an order, and gives to him who holds it no right or title above that of any other Congregational minister. Every Congregational pastor is by virtue of his office the peer of every other Congregational pastor. Such distinctions as may arise belong only to differences in gifts, character, ability or training, and not to the authority of one pastor or church official to exercise authority over any other pastor or his church. Even if the limited ordination which is suggested in a previous section should come into general acceptance, the minister so ordained would be, in the church or territory designated, and for the period of his ordination, the peer of every other Congregational minister.

XV. THE OFFICE OF THE PASTOR

What Constitutes a Congregational Pastor? A Congregational pastor is an elder, presbyter, and bishop, who, being or having been ordained to the work of the gospel ministry, is called by a particular church to be its pastor, and having accepted that call, and being or becoming a member of that church, is recognized in the relation of pastor by a formal act of the local church. The pastorate may be constituted, with or without the concurrent action of a council of the churches of the vicinage, or by the District Association to which the church belongs.

An ordination requires the concurrent action of the churches of the vicinage. Such concurrence is appropriate but not indispensable in the settlement of a minister already ordained.

The Pastoral Office. The New Testament idea of a Christian church is of a brotherhood guided and led by one of its own members, in whom all have so much confidence and love as to entrust him, under Christ, with the responsibility of the pastoral office;—one whose interests will be identical with theirs, and who will "dwell among his own people"; who will be such a shepherd of the flock that the sheep will follow him because they know his voice. But he that is an hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. The more feeble a flock may be, the more it needs the tender care of a shepherd, who loves it because it is his own, and who is even willing to give his life for the sheep. And the more feeble a church may be, the more it needs the service of a pastor; who will make its lot his own, who is willing to spend and be spent for it, who is not mainly occupied in looking out for a better place for himself elsewhere, but whose whole soul is intent upon the growth in grace of the people of God and the conversion of sinners there.—*Dexter:* Congregationalism, pp. 152, 153.

How Is a Pastor Called? A minister is called to be the pastor of a church by specific vote of the church according to the method prescribed in its constitution or rules. The call should be duly certified by the clerk of the church, and, if a pastoral committee is appointed, by the committee also. If there is a society or parish in connection with the church,

the concurrent vote of the society or parish is necessary to make the call effective. The parish or society cannot of itself issue a call, but may defeat the call of the church by refusing to concur or by failure to provide means for carrying out the will of the church. The call having been duly extended should be formally made out in writing, and certified, and sent to the pastor elect. If he is not already ordained, the call should include an invitation to him to join the church in calling a council or a meeting of the Association for ordination. If he is to be installed or recognized, the call should ask his concurrence in the call of the council or invitation of the Association for this purpose. The call may state the date at which the church desires the pastoral relation to begin, but the privilege of fixing that date belongs to the pastor elect, who in accepting the call must first provide for orderly dismission from his present pastorate or other duties in order to consummate a beginning of his new relationship. The methods of recognizing the pastor's relation to the church will be treated under the general headings of Councils and Associations.

The Pastor a Member. There is a seasonable care taken, that, if the candidate were a member of some other church, he have his dismission (his relation declared to be transferred); that, as near as may be, according to the primitive direction, they may choose from among themselves.—*C. Mather:* Ratio Disc., p. 22.

The person called ought to be a member; for to constitute a non-member in office is contrary to the rules of any corporate society. None can be an officer of a corporation, but he that is incorporate first as a member.—*Isaac Chauncy:* Divine Inst. Cong. Chs., p. 65.

Hearing Candidates. The most foolish, and perhaps the easiest way, is to open the pulpit to a succession of candidates to be heard and compared, with the idea of selecting the best. This is usually disastrous in its process and in its result. A foolish choice is often made of the man who preaches with the most ease and happens at the time to interest the people. If his antecedents are in such cases not carefully examined, a church depending simply on such candidating may secure or be secured by an unworthy man without character or record, who sooner or later will reveal himself and work great harm. Indeed, under the most favorable circumstances this process often defeats itself. Many of the best and most self-respecting ministers will not enter into any such competition. If three of the best preachers possible were to succeed each other in

the same pulpit with a view to a call, the congregation would be sure to be divided between them, some preferring one and some another, when they could have heartily united upon either. Usually in such cases all three would probably be dropped, and the church, dreading a repetition of its experience, unite hastily upon some one far inferior to any of those thus set aside.

The best way of proceeding is for the church to elect a committee to find a pastor, making it large enough to be representative, putting in it the best and wisest men, if possible, some one at least who knows men and has facilities for a somewhat wide correspondence. There will usually be a sufficient number of suggestions. Let this committee take advice from the most judicious men in the ministry and perhaps even more in the laity. There is a Board of Pastoral Supply in Boston, Massachusetts, and similar agencies in some other states, to which it is wise to apply for suggestions and for testimony as to men suitable to fill the vacancy. Let this committee first investigate the previous record of each person, as a student, or minister, going no further, if the result of the inquiry is not satisfactory. Let some of them at least hear him preach in his own pulpit, or in some other than their own, and, when they are thoroughly united, let them present his name to the people as their nominee, securing him to preach to them if possible. If the committee has been at all wise, there is every probability that its choice will be ratified by the church, unless new facts appear, or there is general disappointment at the last, which the committee will probably share.—*Boynton:* The Congregational Way, pp. 91-92.

As It Was in Early New England. In some Churches of the Reformation, (bordering upon Switzerland) the People, after the public Performances of a Candidate have recommended him to them, Chuse him for their Pastor; Whereupon the Minister only preaches an Inauguration Sermon, and so without any further Ceremonies of Ordination, goes on with the Exercise of his Ministry. 'Tis not so in the Churches of New England; except a Person has been once already ordained. But in this case, a Minister (suppose removing from a Church here, or in some other Country, where he has been already ordained), being elected and Invited unto the Pastoral charge in any of these Churches a Day of Prayer is kept, and the Choice renewed, and the Charge accepted, in the Presence of Delegates from other churches. And no further imposition of hands is used for his Instalment.—*Cotton Mather:* Discipline in the Churches of New England, 1726; pp. 41, 42.

The Call of a Pastor in Old New England. Towards the end of the day, one of the Elders of the Church (if they have any), if not, one of the graver Brethren of the Church (appointed by themselves to order the worke of the day) standeth up and inquireth of the Church, If now after this solemne seeking of God for his counsell and direction in this weightie work, they still continue in their purpose, to elect such a one for their own Pastor, or Teacher, or Ruling Elder, whom before they agreed upon; Then having taken their silence for a consent to their purpose, He proceedeth to inquire into the approbation of the rest of the Assembly, not

onely the Messengers, and Brethren of other Churches, but of all that stand by; because an Elder is to be a man of good report of them that are without (I Tim. 3:7) how much more well approved of the Churches of Christ? He demandeth therefore of the Churches first, and then of the rest, whether any of them have knowne of any evill, in the man presented before them, either in judgement, or practice, which might give them just cause to forbeare his election? If all keepe silence (as usually they doe, for if any have any just exception against the man, he is wont to acquaint some other of the Church with it before thee day) he turneth himselfe to the Church againe. Now seeing all is clear for their free election of him to such an office, he desireth all the Brethren of that Church, to declare their election of him with one accord, by lifting up their hands.—*John Cotton:* The Way of the Churches, London, 1645, pp. 40, 41.

Right of Church to a Doctrinal Statement from Candidate. It is no unwarrantable assumption for any congregation to require of the candidate for its pastorate a full statement made to them of his doctrinal belief and religious experience.

Besides his primary allegiance to Christ, and his secondary responsibility to his own church, the Congregational minister has a certain tertiary allegiance and responsibility to the Church of Christ at large.—*Ladd:* Principles Church Polity, p. 225.

Modern Congregationalism reverses the order of Dr. Ladd's "secondary" and "tertiary" responsibilities. A church has, indeed, a right to demand that a candidate for its pastorate shall undergo examination by the church itself; but few ministers would submit to such an examination as is here proposed.

May a Call Be Extended for a Limited Time? Ordinarily and historically our Congregational churches call their pastors without time limitation, the pastoral relation to be continued until terminated by mutual consent. A church may, however, call a minister for a year or other definite period of time. This practice is followed in many churches, but is earnestly to be discouraged. The annual election offers an ideal opportunity for mischief-makers, and is a fruitful source of uneasiness in the pastoral relation, resulting in short and ineffective pastorates and the weakening of the pastoral tie. If the church is reluctant to commit itself to a pastoral relationship without limit, it may reserve the right to terminate the pastorate on three or six months' notice, giving to the pastor the same privilege.

Do Congregational Churches Have Ruling Elders? The ruling elders of Congregational churches are the same as teaching elders, namely, ministers. The early efforts to maintain ruling elderships distinct from teaching elderships did not prove successful and were abandoned. Pastors and deacons appear to be all the officers required for the orderly conduct of the affairs of Congregational churches.

Ruling Elders. To the question whether in the primitive churches there were two classes of elders, formally distinguished from each other as "ruling elders" and "teaching elders," Dr. Lightfoot appears to have given an accurate answer in the following passage: "The duties of the presbyters were twofold. They were both rulers and instructors of the congregation. This double function appears in St. Paul's expression 'pastors and teachers' (Eph. 4: 11), where, as the form of the original seems to show, the two words describe the same office under different aspects. Though government was probably the first conception of the office, yet the work of teaching must have fallen to the presbyters from the very first, and have assumed greater prominence as time went on. With the growth of the Church the visits of the apostles and evangelists to any individual community must have become less and less frequent, so that the burden of instruction would be gradually transferred from these missionary preachers to the local officers of the congregation. Hence St. Paul, in two passages where he gives directions relating to bishops or presbyters, insists specially on the faculty of teaching as a qualification for the position (I Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:9). Yet even here this work seems to be regarded rather as incidental to than as inherent in the office. In the one epistle he directs that double honour shall be paid to those presbyters who have ruled well, but especially to such as 'labour in word and doctrine,' as though one holding this office might decline the work of instruction. In the other, he closes the list of qualifications with the requirement that the bishop (or presbyter) hold fast the faithful word in accordance with the apostolic teaching 'that he may be able both to exhort in the healthy doctrine and to confute gainsayers,' alleging as a reason the pernicious activity and growing numbers of the false teachers. Nevertheless there is no ground for supposing that the work of teaching and the work of governing pertained to separate members of the presbyteral college. As each had his special gift, so would he devote himself more or less exclusively to the one or the other of these sacred functions" ("Epistle to the Philippians," pp. 192, 193).

Paul's words in I Tim. 5:17 seem decisive in favour of the theory that in the apostolic churches there were "elders" or "bishops" who did not give public instruction to the congregation. On the other hand, he describes it as a necessary qualification of the "bishop" that he should be "apt to teach" (I Tim. 3:2), and "able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers" (Tit. 1:9). The passage from Dr. Lightfoot suggests the explanation of the apparent contradiction. In the earlier days it

may have been difficult to find several men in every church who united qualifications for exercising pastoral rule with qualifications for giving public pastoral instruction; but to place a church under strong pastoral influence was indispensable, and, therefore, "elders," "bishops," were appointed who could not "labour in word and doctrine." As time went on, there would be a larger number of men with a sufficient knowledge of Christian truth to enable them to discharge the functions both of teaching and governing. Paul therefore charges Timothy and Titus to require that the "elders" or "bishops" should be able to teach as well as rule. There had never, as Dr. Lightfoot says, been any formal distinction between "ruling" and "teaching" elders; Paul now thinks it desirable that every "elder" should teach.

But the question whether there should be "ruling elders" who do not teach is evidently one of those questions of expediency which the church is free to determine according to its varying circumstances. What seems important is that the pastor should not rule alone, but should have associated with him church officers who share the functions of government, and among whom he simply presides. This seems to have been the uniform practice of the apostolic churches, and there are obvious reasons for perpetuating it. At first some elders were able to teach, and some were not; some were, in fact, only ruling elders; others both ruled and taught. When it became possible to secure elders who were qualified for both functions, Paul told Timothy that those should be elected who were "apt to teach" as well as able to rule. It would be well if in all churches all the elders, whether called elders or deacons, were able to exhort and instruct the church; but, if the double qualification cannot be secured in all, we are free to fall back on the practice of the churches in their earliest stage, and have "elders," under whatever name, who can govern, but some of whom cannot teach, associated with an elder—the pastor—who can do both.

Many of the earlier Congregationalists were favorable to the appointment of "ruling elders"; the objection to the title is that it seems to restrain these particular elders from the right to use what powers they may possess for instructing and exhorting their brethren.—*Dale:* Manual, pp. 117-119.

Ruling Elders in Congregational Churches. About 1616 Henry Jacob returned to London from a varied experience on the Continent, and organized the first Congregational church in England which has left any traceable direct descent to the present time. It was naturally a Barrowistic body. So were those which grew up by its side, whose outnumbered pastors gave the Presbyterians so hard a fight in the Westminster Assembly.

On this side of the sea, Cotton, Davenport, and Hooker shared the bitter old misconception and prejudice which had followed poor Browne in his renegade retirement; knew what his system was—his books having disappeared from public knowledge altogether—only from the misrepresentations of his enemies; and—led on in large part by too close an interpretation of a few passages like Romans 12:6-8; I Cor. 12:28; I Tim. 5:17, etc.—they established Barrowism as the type of New England Congregation-

alism. As such it went into the Cambridge Platform, where it especially blossoms in the eleventh section of the tenth chapter, as follows:

"From the Premises, namely, That the ordinary power of Government belonging only to the Elders, power of priviledge remaineth with the brotherhood . . . it followeth, that in an organick Church, and right administration, all Church acts proceed after the manner of a mixt administration, so as no Church act can be consummated, or perfected, without the consent of both."

What this "power of privilege" amounted to is made clear by the eighth section of the same chapter, where we read that when the elders have called the church together upon any weighty occasion "the members so called may not without just cause [the Elders being judges] refuse to come; nor when they are come, depart before they are dismissed; nor speak in the Church before they have leave from the Elders; nor continue so doing when they [the Elders] require silence; nor may they oppose nor contradict the judgment or sentence of the Elders without [what those Elders concede to be] sufficient and weighty cause; because such practices are manifestly contrary unto order and government, and in-lets of disturbance, and tend to confusion."

Beautiful in theory as Barrowe thought this must be in the eye of every truly good man, and well-balanced as John Cotton conceived it ought to prove in practice, New England never really took to it. It may be doubtful if a single church here ever fully furnished itself with elders according to Barrowe's ideal; and it proved in practice excessively difficult to obtain fit men to serve in an office at once so exacting, so unsatisfying, and so liable to be unpopular. The pastors, however, for a long time proved equal to the emergency, and made up in quality of assumption for quantity of eldership. In many cases, after ruling elders had altogether ceased to be attempted to be chosen, the pastor assumed to himself solely the function constitutionally assigned to a session of which theoretically he was but a single member, and, in virtue of the eleventh section above cited, claimed and exercised the right to veto all church action which displeased him; on the ground that "no church act can be consummated, or perfected, without the consent of both."

I need not suggest that such a condition of affairs was not a wholesome one for religion here. It was no strange thing that unrest followed. It would be too long a story for this page how God raised up John Wise of Ipswich, and, two generations later, Nathaniel Emmons of Franklin, by whose masterful logic, and powerful influence, the churches were carried back to New Testament times, and Congregationalism—although these men scarcely knew the precise quality, or the full value, of that which they were doing—once more consistently planted upon the foundations which Robert Browne had elaborated for it in Norwich three hundred years ago. There was a difference in philosophy; none at all in the result. The world had been drifting toward democracy. And Wise and Emmons both demonstrated, with irresistible clearness and force, that democracy is not only a sound, but the best. government, whether for Church or State. So that the votes

which in Robert Browne's little church at Middelberg its members gave not in their own right, but as vicegerents of Christ, the members of our American churches now give, under some solemn sense of fealty to the Master indeed, and with supreme desire to please Him, yet humbly as of their own right under Him, as being intelligent and responsible members of a spiritual commonwealth, each one of whom must give account before God for the use of the talents and gifts with which he has been endowed.—*Dexter:* Handbook, 9-11.

What Is a Collegiate Pastor? A collegiate pastor is one of several colleagues in the plural pastorate of a single church, or a federate group of churches having a common basis of authority and control.

What Is an Assistant Pastor? An assistant pastor is an ordained minister called by the church to share in the responsibility and work of the pastor, and subject to his direction. His position as a minister of the gospel is equal to that of the pastor, but his position in the pastorate of the local church is subordinate, and his is a delegated authority. The pastoral work should be so divided that he shall have certain departments of work in which he is free to exercise initiative, but subject to the general direction of the pastor.

What Is a Pastor's Assistant? A pastor's assistant is not an assistant pastor. He may or may not be an ordained minister. He is not commonly called by the church, but in general is selected by the pastor, or by the pastor and deacons on the approval of the church. There is a growing and commendable custom of employing trained women as pastors' assistants.

What Is an Acting Pastor? An acting pastor is a minister called by the church for a limited period during the absence or disability of the pastor, or between pastorates.

Commonly it is understood that an acting pastor is not a candidate for the permanent pastorate. A definite understanding on this point has often saved embarrassment to both parties, even though in some cases it has later come to pass that the acting pastorate became a very happy and fruitful permanent pastorate. During the period of his

acting pastorate the incumbent may be authorized by the church to represent it in councils.

What Is a Pastoral Supply? A pastoral supply is a minister or licentiate temporarily invited to conduct services and to perform pastoral functions to which his ecclesiastical standing may entitle him. In some communions he is called a *locum tenens*. He may or may not be an ordained minister, and may be a minister of another denomination. If he be an ordained minister the church can authorize him during the period of his supply to perform within it any ministerial functions which it may direct, and if he be a Congregational minister it may make him its ministerial representative in a particular council.

May a Church Employ a Non-Congregational Supply? A church may employ a pastoral supply who is not a Congregationalist, but in such cases reasonable caution should be exercised. Two recent cases have come to the personal knowledge of the author in which a man has been employed as pastoral supply who was not a member of a Congregational church or of any Congregational Association and who proved unworthy. As no Congregational body was authorized to certify his standing, so none was authorized to try him and depose him. Only those men should be employed for whom some evangelical body is responsible.

What Is the Pastor's Duty as Preacher? The first duty of a pastor is the preaching of the gospel. For this work he should make diligent preparation, earnestly searching the Scriptures that he may know and proclaim the truth and bringing forth out of his treasures things new and old. He should separate himself from all worldly callings that can interfere with his success as a preacher, or encroach upon his time, or diminish his opportunity for study. He should so care for his health and exercise his voice that he may effectively present the gospel to his people.

What Is the Pastor's Function as Teacher? In the early Congregational churches there was little if any attempt to combine in one man the office of pastor and teacher. A

plural ministry was the rule, with one man as pastor and another as teacher. But this division of labor did not always work well, and the office of teacher proved unpractical. It therefore became customary in calling a minister to state in the call that he was to be "pastor and teacher," and this is the customary form in modern Congregationalism. In large churches with more than one minister, it is customary to choose an assistant with reference to his ability as teacher, but he is commonly an associate or assistant pastor, the responsibility for the teaching still residing in the pastor.

Is the Office of Teacher Distinct from That of Pastor? Goodwin, in his Church Government, answers the plea that they were one and the same, by insisting that the Greeks used *kai* disjunctively at the end of a disjunctive enumeration, and applies it to Eph. 4: 11. Cambridge Platform says: "The office of pastor and teacher appears to be distinct." (See ib. on Pastor, his office.) Johnson, in his Treatise on the Reformed Churches, argues that they are distinct, from Eph. 4: 11; I Cor. 12: 5, 6; with Rom. 12: 7, 8. He says that the distinctive particle is used in Eph. 4: 11, in the Syriac translation, which is the oldest. Baillie says: "The Independents were for a doctor in every congregation, as well as a pastor. . . . The absolute necessity of a doctor was, however, eschewed (by the Westminster Assembly); yet, where two ministers could be had, one was allowed, according to his gift, to apply himself more to teaching, and the other to exhortation, according to the Scriptures." Cotton Mather, in his Ratio Disciplinæ, says that, "when there were two ministers to a church, one of them was formerly distinguished by the name of teacher. . . . More lately, the distinction is less regarded; their being mentioned so as they are together in the Sacred Oracles (Eph. 4: 11) pleaded for little short of an identity between them." The distinction has now gone into practical disuse. (See Punchard's View, 80.) I. Chauncy contends that "the pastoral office comprehends the whole ministry of the church; but if, by reason of infirmity, or the size of the church, the pastor is unable to do the whole work, he may have aid or helps—a teacher to aid him in preaching, or a ruling elder to assist in ruling. He that is called to concur with the pastor in teaching, waits on that service, I Pet. 4: 10, 11; and he that is called on to concur with him in ruling is to wait on that work especially." —*Cummings:* Cong. Dict., Teacher.

Is the Congregational Pastor a Prophet? The Christian ministry perpetuates not the priestly but the prophetic office of the church. Although the minister have and must have a constant ministry of intercession for others, yet is his office that of a proclaimer of the truth. Neither in his

case nor in that of the earlier prophets is his ministry largely one of prediction. He is not a foreteller but a forth-teller. To him the Spirit of God is given that he may interpret things as they are in process of coming to pass.

Ministerial Leadership. In our Congregational theory the church is first of all, composed of ordinary men and women who love our Lord Jesus Christ and unite for service in his name. This theory, as held in completeness and consistency by us, distinguishes our polity. Out of the church comes the specialized ministry of religion. Needing instructors and leaders, the church lays hands on a sufficient number and puts them forth. They in turn are evermore responsible to the church and depend upon her for opportunity and resources. The church is first, the ministry second and subordinate.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, p. 37.

The Doom of Leadership. He who has borne the burden and heat of the day learns in bitterness of soul the doom of leadership. To stand in the midst of the ecclesia, with the ordinary vicissitudes of man's life transpiring upon one's self from day to day, its variations of mental activity, its episodes of spiritual depression, its yoke of earthly care, its fettering relationships, and yet to behold a thousand souls assembled and waiting for inspiration from one soul; to be conscious perpetually of this silent demand upon one's selfhood; to know that life must be maintained at the giving point, at the point of spiritual exaltation, where influence is generated for the uplift of many souls; to look into the faces of men and women gathered in the house of God, and to see in some the hunger of expectation that must be fed, in others the absence of energy that must be supplied—that is the doom of leadership.—*Chas. Cuthbert Hall:* Ministerial Power, p. 173.

What Authority Has the Pastor? In the exercise of his office the pastor has authority commensurate with his responsibility. The duties which his call and office presume he has authority to carry out, and to use the necessary means for carrying them out. He has authority to teach the doctrines contained in the church creed, liberally interpreted in the spirit of reasonable freedom. He has authority to arrange the order of the church service so as to promote the spiritual welfare of the church, being guided by the counsel of the deacons in matters concerning which a difference of opinion may arise and where the church itself has final authority in matters of its own form of worship. The minister's authority to call for special meetings for the observance of Holy Week or the Week of Prayer could not reasonably be called in question, but the arrangement

for a series of evangelistic services involving extra expense, and calling for the employment of unusual agencies, should be submitted certainly to the board of deacons, and in ordinary cases approved by the church. His right to use the church building for spiritual ends does not authorize him to arrange for concerts, bazaars, political gatherings, or discussions of public questions, even if in his judgment these have a spiritual bearing, except by authority of the trustees of the church. The trustees cannot interfere with any spiritual use he may make of the building, but they should be consulted in every case where the building is proposed to be used for any purpose not clearly in the line of the spiritual work of the church.

He is the leader of the Sunday school, and all its officers and teachers are under his general direction through the superintendent. This does not authorize him to remove a teacher without the consent of the superintendent, nor to change radically the policy of the Sunday school on his own initiative without the concurrent action of those placed under him in authority over that particular branch of the work. The same is true of all other organizations in the church. All spiritual work within the church is under the pastor's general advice and direction. But a department of the church work being organized as a department with its own officers and forms of work, it would not only be rude and ungracious but an unwarranted act for the pastor to ignore those to whom that work is committed. Still more would it be a rude and unauthorized act for any department of the church work to set itself against the reasonable authority of the pastor, and to assume that Sunday school, or Christian Endeavor society, or missionary society existed in its own right independent of the church and in no sense responsible to the minister. The minister's responsibility is large, and his authority must be commensurate with that responsibility. It is an authority to be exercised with great tact and patience, and with constant regard not only for the rights but for the feelings of others. The

minister's authority over the music of the church does not extend to the employment of organist or choir, or to the selection of the hymn books, or the purchase of musical instruments. All this belongs to the church through its constituted committees or officers. But the pastor has authority to determine what music shall or shall not be rendered in any particular service, and should exercise this authority not by arbitrary and spasmodic interference, but by constant and intimate association with those who arrange the music. Differences of opinion that grow up between minister and choir, or minister and music committee, often occur through the attempt to enforce an authority that long has been neglected, whereas the minister's relations to these interests should be constant, and exercised in the form of advice or friendly counsel rather than by direct command.

The pastor has authority in his utterances to speak the truth as he sees the truth, with confidence that he is the servant of no man; but he has no authority to use his pulpit for libelous utterances, or for the expression of harsh or uncharitable judgments, or for the censure of his personal enemies, or for the gratification of his own likes or dislikes. He is free from all, yet the servant of all, and in the exercise of his authority he is to do all things to the end of edifying the Body of Christ.

Ministers Subject to Churches. Nor doth it make the people rulers of their rulers, . . . that the church hath power over them, in case of delinquency; for excommunication is not an act of the highest rule, but of the highest judgment. . . . If the ministers become delinquents, then, as members, they are under the whole.—*Davenport:* Power of Cong. Churches, ii, 65.

Power of the Congregation. This power of government in the elders, doth not any wise prejudice the power of privilege in the brotherhood; as neither the power of privilege in the brethren doth prejudice the power of government in the elders, but they may sweetly agree together.—*Cambridge Platform:* x, 10.

Relations of Pastor and People. Christian congregations should be trained to reason with and rebuke the pastors who preach unsound doctrine: Christian pastors should show themselves thoroughly enough Christian to heed the reasoning, and submit with humility to the rebuke. The pastor who feels himself most loftily

elevated above his own church in the knowledge of the doctrine of Christ is most ill fitted to be their pastor. To what lengths of unreason and discourtesy a minister may be carried by wholly forgetting the essential nature of his relations to the people, some of our own controversial books and pamphlets have made us aware!—*Ladd:* Polity, p. 224.

Pastors Lead, Not Rule. All pastors should remember that the people rule in our polity, and the people should suffer no pastor to forget. The Congregational pastor is neither ruler nor hired servant. He should neither lord it over the flock, nor do their work for them at market-place wages for a definite time. He is the elected leader, whose duty is to lead and train. He will do well to have conspicuous among his working principles this one, that he will do nothing which he can get any one else to do.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, p. 76.

May a Pastor Advise a Child Against the Advice of the Parent? This is a delicate question which cannot be answered in every case by the same unqualified word. There might arise, and have arisen occasions, in which parents instructing a child to commit a crime should be advised by the minister not to do the thing which his parents have been instructing him to do. Yet any such example must be counted as the very rare exception. Questions sometimes arise in the matter of young people uniting with the church. Very rarely indeed, if ever, ought a pastor to encourage a minor to unite with the church against the insistent prohibition of the parent. This is not only good religion but good law. In such a case the parent should be seen and earnestly consulted to encourage the child in the Christian life, but if the parent remains obdurate, the child should be counseled to continue in only such outward Christian activities as the parent approves, and beyond this to exercise patience and prayer and to perform the duties of a child so faithfully as in time to secure the parental consent.

A test case of the right of a minister to interfere with the will of a parent was that of a young woman of seventeen, whose parents were Presbyterians and who herself desired to join a Baptist church. The Baptist minister immersed her against the expressed will of her father. The

court decided that the act of the minister was an unwarranted interference with the lawful authority of the father.

What Is the Value of Installation? Installation is a safeguard to the local church. It offers the examination of a minister's credentials by a competent and authorized body. If universally practiced it would result in almost complete elimination of adventurers from the Congregational ministry. It is also a fitting act of fellowship, recognizing the common interest of the churches in the important act of beginning a new pastorate.

Installation has a legal value. An installed minister cannot be removed from his pulpit against his will except for gross immorality, neglect of duty, or essential change of doctrine.

Is Installation a Growing Custom of Our Churches? Installation has steadily declined during the past half century. While it has much to commend it, and deserves to be encouraged, it has steadily lessened, spite of almost unreasonable efforts to increase its scope. The Boston Platform of 1865 unwarrantedly denied the title, pastor, to any but installed ministers; and Dr. Dexter, after decades of insistence upon installation, dedicated his latest book of Polity "To the Settled Pastors of the Congregational Churches." Spite of these efforts to outlaw all others, the number of installed ministers has diminished both absolutely and relatively. Dr. George M. Boynton wrote in 1904:

> According to the Year Book there were, January 1, 1903, 4,393 churches with pastors. Of these only 819 were with pastors installed by council, that is, only eighteen per cent of the whole number. Of the 1,311 in the New England states, 506 were installed after the old pattern, a little less than thirty-nine per cent, while of the larger states in the West the percentage is from five to twenty-five per cent. It is interesting to trace this matter back for nearly fifty years. In 1857, out of 1,768 churches 947 had pastors installed by council, or fifty-four per cent. The percentage was lessened year by year until 1880, when of 2,800 churches 881 had pastors installed by council. Thus at this half-way point from our earliest complete denominational statistics in 1857 the percentage had decreased from fifty-four per cent to thirty per cent. Since then it has dropped to eighteen per cent.

Decline of Installation. In New England a bare majority of our churches, and in the rest of the country only one-fifth of them, are protected by the safeguard of installation. In 1857, when the statistics of our churches were first published, seventy-three per cent of our pastors in New England were installed, and fifty-four per cent of all our ministers there. Such being the facts, the churches there cannot much longer depend entirely on councils of ordination and installation for safeguards of purity. Indeed, wisdom demands that those states begin finding some better safeguard, or soon their churches will be defenseless.

During the last thirty years strenuous efforts have been made in papers, associations, and councils to induce the churches to install their pastors. The result is indicated in the following table, which shows a steady and great relative decline in installations:

Year.	Installed Pastors.	Pastors.	Ministers.	Per cent of the installed: Of Pastors.	Of Ministers.
1857	1,025	706	2,350	59.2	40.5
1867	887	1,111	2,879	44.4	30.8
1877	889	1,474	3,406	39.0	26.1
1885	954	1,910	4,043	33.3	23.6
1914	560	3,535	5,923	15.8	9.4

This decadence in installations has come about in the face of the most persistent efforts to encourage the churches to call such councils. As a means to this end reports in our Year Books have divided pastors into two classes, "pastors" and "acting pastors," and the Boston Council, in 1865, declared installation necessary to the recognition of a preacher as a pastor (Boston Platform, Part III, ch. ii, 7 [2]). It can hardly be hoped that since the churches have stated fellowship in their associations, they will ever return to councils in addition as safeguards of purity; since a comprehensive, inexpensive, normal, and adequate safeguard is found in ministerial standing in associations of churches.

No safeguard which reaches only a small proportion of ministers and churches, and is failing in spite of every device to sustain it, can be adequate, and no such safeguard should be relied on any longer than is needful for adjustment to a better way. The ease with which councils can be packed, their unfitness for careful inquiry on the eve of installations, their tendency to stir up strife by hasty action, the fact that if one council fail to do the will of a church another can be called to do it, their narrow scope, their expense in countries with few churches, their politico-ecclesiastical origin—these and some other things render it evident that councils, except for adjustment of troubles and the discipline of ministers or churches, will ultimately cease.—*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, pp. 291-292.

The decline has continued until the Year Book for 1914 shows only 560 installed pastors out of 3,535 serving the churches as pastors, and out of a total of 5,923 ministers, a percentage of less than sixteen.

Who May Install a Minister? A minister may be in-

stalled either by an installing council, or by the District Association to which the installing church belongs.

A form of service suitable for installation will be found in Barton's Congregational Manual.

What Is the Value of a Recognition Service? Where a church prefers not to install its pastor, it may call a council of recognition. Such a council has no legal authority and the pastoral relation may be dissolved either with or without a dismissing council, but it has the value of safeguarding the interests of the church and of expressing the fellowship of the churches. The procedure is the same as in a council for installation, and the same form may be used excepting that the word, recognize, should take the place of install, and recognition take the place of installation.

How May a Church Terminate a Pastorate? A pastor who has been called without time limitation, and settled in his pastoral office according to the customs of his denomination, can legally be driven from his pastorate for one of three reasons: First, gross neglect of duty; second, gross immorality; third, radical departure from the theological views held by him and publicly expressed at the time when he became pastor of the church. Very rarely is a pastorate terminated for any one of these three reasons. A church which is convinced that the time has come when its present pastorate should terminate ought first of all to search its own heart and motive and be sure that it has fulfilled and is willing to fulfill all its own duty to the pastor, and that the fault, if fault there be, which exists as the ground for the separation, is wholly his. The vague charge that "there is some criticism," or that "certain influential people have left the church," or that "he is not popular with the young people," or that "he has given offense to some important interest," is not a sufficient reason, and ought not to be a sufficient moral ground, for the termination of a pastorate. Before acting on any of these grounds, the church should earnestly inquire of itself whether it has striven faithfully and affectionately to co-operate with its minister,

to supplement his deficiencies and to make his ministry effective, and if the fault or any part of the fault lie with the church it should first seek to correct its own error before thrusting him forth. But if convinced that the pastorate ought to terminate, the officers of the church should confer with the minister lovingly and in a brotherly spirit, advise him that in the judgment of the church the time is approaching when a change should be made, and give him time and reasonable opportunity to seek another field. In almost every case a minister thus approached will willingly withdraw, even at the cost of great sacrifice. In the interval that remains between such a conference and the retirement of the minister, he should be given every reasonable opportunity to find another parish, and the church should gladly co-operate with him in this matter.

When the time comes for the dissolution of the pastorate, his resignation having been read from the pulpit and formally accepted in a business meeting of the church, the pastor should be dismissed from the church by a regular letter to the church which he wishes to join, and the church may very properly in addition pass resolutions saying all that it can truthfully say that is favorable to him as a minister and a man.

Termination of Pastorate. When the pastoral relation is to be terminated, if on account of dissatisfaction with the minister, great care should be taken that everything be done in a spirit of considerate kindness on both sides. Unless the cause be moral delinquency, the communication of the desire on the part of the church should be made so as to wound as little as possible. It is not pleasant at the best to be told that personal services are no longer desired, and yet it must sometimes be done. Let it be done with a kind heart and tongue, after much prayer and with the good of the church as the only motive. Let those who must communicate such sad news put themselves in the place of him to whom it is to be told and consider how they would feel about it. It should be done frankly when necessary. It is a poor compliment to a man to suggest that he does not want to know the truth; only be sure that it is the truth and spoken in love.

The minister, too, should not be angry. He should keep resentful thoughts from his heart and sharp words from his lips. He should not emphasize the ingratitude of those for whom he has done so much; perhaps they have done and borne as much for

nim as they have received from him.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, pp. 94-95.

Should a Minister Stand on His Legal Rights? A minister should know his rights under the law, but should rarely stand on them. The servant of the Lord should not strive. At the same time, the church should know the legal rights of the minister, and accord him not only those, but the full measure of Christian courtesy in addition.

Legal Rights of Minister. By the old usage and by the decisions of courts, a minister installed without limit of time or provision for termination of relation has a claim upon the church or society for salary promised him annually until he shall be convicted either of immorality, neglect of duty, or material change of beliefs. But these are not by any means the only reasons which may lead a church to desire a change of pastors. One may be eminently unsuccessful, although he is guilty of none of these things, and for the good and growth of the church should leave it. Some prominent instances have occurred within the past few years where pastors have successfully resisted all efforts to displace them until really bought off. It is not strange that intelligent churches should hesitate to put their necks under this yoke of bondage. They therefore settle their pastor without a council. But this omission is by no means necessary in order to escape this trouble or danger. Churches and ministers are insisting in these days on putting a provision into the call by which, on thirty days' or three months' notice from either pastor or church and with approval of an ecclesiastical council, the pastoral relation may be terminated. This is simple and safe for both parties.—*Boynton:* The Congregational Way, p. 117.

We think that under those peculiar circumstances, where the matter is reduced, by the pastor's unreason, to a contest upon the arena of bare legal right, a parish would be justified in what, under other circumstances cannot too much be condemned; namely, such a legal reduction of his salary as may remove that inducement for his persistent hold upon the contract. It will do no good to close the meeting-house against him, because the courts have repeatedly decided that the pastor who holds himself at all times ready to discharge his legal duties, may lawfully claim his salary, even when the parish do not allow him to perform them. But if a pastor could be so lost to all sense of the decencies—not to say proprieties—of his position, as thus to persist in inflicting his presence upon a loathing people, in the face of the advice of his brethren in council; we do feel that his people would be justified in all legal efforts, by way of reprisals, to make his position uncomfortable among them—until he should be driven to cut the knot by his reluctant resignation. We thank God, however, for the belief that there cannot be one Congregational minister in ten thousand, who, under any circumstances of sanity, could be brought to allow himself to be thus "an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword" on the earth.—*Dexter:* Congregationalism, p. 204.

How May a Minister Terminate a Pastorate? A minister may terminate a pastorate by resignation, which must be accepted by the church, and if he be installed by council, approved by a dismissing council. If the contract with the church includes a clause requiring a prior notice, he should be scrupulously careful to observe the conditions of his contract. If he accepts another call, it should be only a conditional acceptance, subject to his honorable release from his present office by the regular dissolution of his pastorate.

Is a Dismissing Council Necessary? A dismissing council is always permissible, and in case a minister has been installed by council, it is necessary. The council should inquire concerning the success of the pastorate and the reasons for its dissolution, and if the minister is worthy should give him a certificate which shall serve as a credential to the church or council to which he may be going.

Is the Advice of a Dismissing Council Authoritative? While the general principle holds that a Congregational council has only advisory power, still if a minister is installed by a council and his resignation is submitted and accepted subject to the advice by council, the concurrent action of council is necessary to the dissolution of the pastorate, and if the council refuses to act the pastorate is not terminated but continues. If the council concurs, the pastorate is terminated.

Church Free to Act. A church being free, cannot become subject to any, but by a free election; yet when such a people do choose any to be over them in the Lord, then do they become subject, and most willingly submit to their ministry in the Lord, whom they have so chosen.—Cambridge Platform, vii, 6.

The church either puts their ministers into office, or delegates power to neighboring ministers to do it for them, which is the same thing as doing it themselves. Therefore, as neighboring ministers could not place a pastor over them without their consent; so they cannot put away or dismiss their pastor without their consent. The voice of the church must always be had in every act of discipline. Now, if a council cannot dismiss a minister without the consent of the church, then it clearly appears, that the right of dismission belongs solely to the church, who may dismiss their minister without the advice, or contrary to the advice of a council,

if they think he has forfeited his ministerial character; but not otherwise.—*Emmons:* Platform Eccl. Govt., Inference I.

If the Congregational type of ministry is the truest to the apostolic church order, it is so precisely because it best preserves the primitive relation between people and pastor, a loving church and a divinely qualified ministry, and this with a view to foster the intimate religious fellowship contemplated in the gospel of Christ. But the best in ideal is always the most difficult to realize in practice. Thus it behooves us to take more seriously to heart the task of educating our people to something like a due sense of the high notion of Christian fellowship involved in the Congregational conception of the local church, as a body entrusted by God with the responsibility of determining its own ministry, so far as that falls to men at all.—*J. Vernon Bartlet:* Address at International Congregational Council at Edinburgh, 1908, pp. 219-220.

The Pastor's Authority. The pastor is to be loved, honored and obeyed, in the Lord. He is placed over the church by both the Head of the body, and by the free and voluntary act of the body itself. Though he professes no magisterial authority, and has no power, either spiritual or temporal, to enforce mandates or inflict penalties, yet the very position he occupies as teacher and leader supposes authority vested in him. On the one hand, the minister is not to be regarded with ignorant and blind devotion, as if possessed of superhuman attributes, whose official acts must be venerated even though his private life be scandalous; nor yet, on the other hand, is he to be considered a mere puppet for the capricious mistreatment of such as wish to show their independence, and "use their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness."—*Hiscox:* Baptist Directory, p. 100.

Must Pastoral Conditions Be Ideal? Ministers should not expect perfect churches, nor churches perfect ministers. The pastoral relation, like marriage, calls for mutual concessions and adjustments, which are to be made in a spirit of mutual love.

Few Ideal Pastorates. The ideal pastorate is, no doubt, lifelong; but in practical life this is seldom realized. In theory there is something beautiful in the case of a minister who spends his whole life among the same people, loved, honored and venerated till his death; around whom the new generation grows up as his supporters, when the fathers have passed away. Honored by his compeers, loved by the young, venerated by the children, he becomes the typical patriarch and shepherd of the flock. Such things have been; but seldom can they now be found—certainly not in our denomination. And perhaps, on the whole, it may be just as well. The restless spirit of a headlong age and a busy life demands change—change in hope of progress, but change at any rate. The romance of a beautiful theory cannot control the activities of society, not even in Christian circles, since there, also, a carnal, utilitarian spirit is likely to rule.—*Hiscox:* Baptist Directory, p. 102.

How Can a Church Be Saved from an Unworthy Pastor? No church should call a pastor, or even hear a minister as a candidate until it has satisfied itself that he is in good standing. To do this is not a difficult matter. It can first look in the Congregational Year Book, which is supplied to every church clerk and pastor, and see if his name appears there as a minister in good standing. Inquiry may be made of the Superintendent of the state in which he last labored. If he comes from another denomination, inquiry should be made through our own Congregational officials. It has happened many times that adventurers have gotten into our Congregational pulpits, sometimes captivating the congregation to an extent that made any attempt to keep them out practically futile. Such men having obtained a foothold in one church go with unfortunate ease to another, sometimes leaving behind them a trail of divided and almost ruined churches. Such men usually possess the easy power of convincing some good people within a church that they have been wronged and that any attempt to inquire into their past, or request for their credentials, is an indication of persecution. Every qualified Congregational minister has credentials which certify to his standing, and no such minister being honest will be offended if asked to produce them. But credentials are not personal letters of recommendation. These are far too easily obtained and sometimes secured by fraud or misrepresentation. A minister's credentials include: First, evidence that he is a member in good standing of some local Congregational church; secondly, a certificate of his ordination; thirdly, evidence of his present membership in a Congregational Association, whose officers are named in the Congregational Year Book and can always be written to in order to ascertain whether the credentials may possibly be forged. If a Congregational church will be as careful about calling an unknown man as a local bank would be about cashing a check for a stranger, a great deal of trouble will be saved.

XVI. ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCILS

What Is an Ecclesiastical Council? An ecclesiastical council is a body composed of representatives of the churches of a particular locality called together for the consideration of a specific matter set forth in a document known as a Letter Missive, issued by the inviting church or other body competent to issue such a letter, which document is the charter of the council.

Councils and Synods. Synods we acknowledge, being rightly ordered, as an Ordinance of Christ. Of their assembly we find three just causes in Scripture. (1) When a Church wanting light or peace at home, desireth the counsell and help of other Churches, few or moe. (2) When any Church lyeth under scandall, and will not be healed by more private advertisement of their own members or neighbor ministers. (3) It may so fall out that the state of all the Churches may be corrupted, and beginning to see their corruption may desire the counsell of one another for a speedy and safe and general reformation.—*John Cotton:* The Keys of the Kingdom, p. 23.

Synods and Councels have powers of Iurisdiction, to declare and apply both implicite and explicite Laws of Christ in a Brotherly maner. Fathers, Modern Divines, Calvin and his successors, all do generally, or for the most part, consent to this Proposition, though the opposition of the extreme opinion of Papal power hath occasioned some to speak too diminitively of Synods and Councels. The power of many Churches over one is natural and naturally necessary, as the power of many Members over one Member, if it be true (which hath been proposed) that all Churches are but one Church and corporation under the Lord Christ.—*James Noyes:* The Temple Measured, London, 1647.

The Name Council. The Congregational use of the name council is historically a gathering of neighboring churches called by a local church to act with, or to give advice to it in any condition where that aid is needed and requested. A council is thus called to advise or co-operate in a definite matter (*pro re nata*). The only exception to this use of the word Congregationally is in connection with the National Council, which in fact is a National Association or Conference of churches.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 102.

What Is the Meaning of "Pro Re Nata"? *Pro re nata* means "born for the purpose." The term is used to distinguish councils convened by letter missive for the consideration of a specific matter, from all other ecclesiastical assemblies called councils, as, for example, ecumenical

councils, national councils, or other denominational or interdenominational conferences that may be called councils.

What Is the Function of an Ecclesiastical Council? Ecclesiastical councils are, first of all, organs for the expression of the fellowship of the churches. From the beginning Congregational churches have held not only to freedom but to fellowship as fundamental to the Congregational system. Forms for the expression of fellowship have varied, but the council is the oldest and best established of all accredited forms of co-operant action among Congregational churches. Particularly, councils are called to organize or recognize churches, to ordain or install or recognize ministers, and to give advice in matters of church life and administration.

The Fellowship of the Church. A church of Jesus Christ may exist and be complete in itself without any relation to another church. It may be so isolated in position that it is impossible to maintain such relations. It may be so surrounded with alien and ungodly influences that there is no other similar body with which it can be in fellowship. Such a church is an Independent, not a Congregational church. Fellowship between churches is maintained by various means of communication, by councils, or by Associations (Conferences, Conventions); that is, by representative gatherings of churches called to advise and help in special cases, or organized to meet regularly for consultation and fellowship.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 101.

No Authority Over Other Churches. Churches are in all ecclesiastical matters equal; . . . Christ has not subjected any church or congregation to any other superior ecclesiastical jurisdiction than to that which is within itself; so that, if a whole church or congregation should err in any matters of faith or worship, no churches or spiritual officers have power to censure or punish them, but are only to counsel and advise them.—*Bradshaw:* English Puritanism, ch. ii; sec. 2, 3, in Neal's Puritans, i, 248.

Who May Call a Council? In a majority of cases, a council is called by a local church; but this is not an invariable rule. The following methods are orderly:

(1.) A local church may call a council to organize or to recognize a newly organized church; to welcome to fellowship a church of another denomination desiring to become Congregational; to ordain, install or dismiss a pastor; or to advise in any case of need.

(2.) Two or more churches may join in calling a council where they have common interests in a proposed undertaking, as the organization of a new church lying between them.

A mother church having organized a mission or branch church into an independent church may join with the latter in calling a council of recognition.

A group of churches may call a council to determine the wisdom of organizing an Association, or to determine a boundary between Associations, or for other suitable reasons.

In cases where a group of churches having common interests unite in calling a council, the inviting churches may desire to send delegates and participate in the deliberations of the council which they call, and this is orderly if their intentions are stated in the letter missive. In cases where a mother church and a daughter church unite in the call of a council for the recognition of the latter, the mother church may be entitled to representation in the council if the letter missive so states, but in no case where two or more churches unite in calling a council may either of the inviting churches be represented in the council if the occasion for the call be any controversy between the inviting churches or any of them.

(3.) A church and one or more of its members may call a council. In any case where a difference of opinion arises between a church and its minister, or between the church and one or more of its members, and the local church has found no satisfactory solution of the difficulty, the two parties may unite in the call of a council.

A council is called by two parties having different interests which they agree to arbitrate before a council, which is called a mutual council; the term is not applied where two parties are in agreement, as where two churches agree to organize a third church and unite in a letter missive.

(4.) A minister or other member or group of members may call a council in a case where serious injustice is

alleged to have been done by the local church and the church refuses to make amends. Such a council is called an *ex-parte* council, but is never to be called excepting where a mutual council has been refused.

(5.) An Association or Conference may become a party to a council when a question arises concerning its treatment of one or more of its members. If an Association withdraws fellowship from a minister and he is dissatisfied he may not appeal to the State Conference, which is not organized as an appellate court, and has no authority to reverse decisions in the District Association, but he may appeal to a council and invite the Association to join him in so doing; or the Association because of any appearance of local prejudice that might seem to disqualify it from dealing with an alleged offense may join in calling and become a party to a council.

The same right to become a party to a council belongs to the State Conference. A State Conference may refuse to receive as a member a minister even though he be in fellowship with an Association, and has the right to do so if he be of bad moral character. The minister has no right of appeal from the State Conference to the National Council, but may appeal to a mutual council called to consider that question.

These provisions for the participation of a Conference or Association in a council are recent developments of our Congregational polity, but grow logically out of the lodging of ministerial standing in District Associations. It is repugnant to our system that there should ever be a series of courts rising one above another from local church to District Association and thence to State Conference and National Council. The mutual council is the logical resort in cases of this character. It is hoped that it will not frequently be employed, but if necessity arises for its use, its right to be cannot reasonably be challenged.

(6.) A Missionary Society. While the occasions are rare in which a missionary society may be expected to call a

council, still this has been done, and it is a possibility to be recognized. The emergency of calling a council to ordain a foreign missionary is treated under the paragraph, "May a Missionary Society Ordain a Missionary?"

Dr. Dexter maintained that a council must invariably be called by a church, except in two instances: First, that of a company of Christians proposing to organize a church; and secondly, that of an aggrieved individual member calling an *ex-parte* council (Handbook, p. 118). The answer of Dr. Ross appears much more logical:

> Can an association be a party in the calling of a council? We may answer: (1) That whatever concerns the churches may be the ground of a council. If a thing be of common well-being, the churches may sit in council upon it. And the parties most affected or involved are the ones that should invite the churches to give their advice in the matter. (2) Past usage cannot prevent needed changes. If it could, then a living infallible pope were better than an unchangeable custom. Usage is not superior to principle and growth, and hence it must change, since Congregationalism is a living organism. (3) The past has had similar councils. We have already shown how the General Court of Massachusetts Bay, which was also a General Association of the churches, called councils. Besides, councils have been called by Associations of ministers, by towns, and by missionary societies (*Dexter:* Congregationalism in Lit., 526, 527; *Upham:* Ratio Disciplinæ, sec. 93). There is nothing to hinder the calling of such councils, if there be a general need of them. (4) That there is such need is easily made apparent. Ministerial standing of some sort is now held largely in Associations of churches or of ministers. Ministers have been expelled from them, either after a fair inquiry or without a fair hearing, possibly no notice having been given them; and their expulsion is published in the papers to their great damage. If they are unjustly dealt with in such exclusion, how shall the wrong be ascertained and redressed? There is only one ecclesiastical way of redress in our polity equal and fair to both the parties involved. If redress be sought in the civil courts on a suit for libel or slander, or in a mandamus ordering their restoration to membership, the expense is great, the result probably adverse, and our polity is put to shame. If a church call a council on the case, its action therein is indirect and inadequate. Each such case can be covered and full redress rendered only by a mutual council called by the two parties involved, the minister suspended or expelled or excluded and the association or conference doing the alleged wrong. Neither civil courts nor other councils meet the requirements of the case. Hence justice and polity alike demand that in such cases at least associations be parties in the calling of councils. Nothing else will satisfy.—Church-Kingdom, pp. 282-283.

(7.) A group of people who desire to organize a church may call a council to effect such organization.

Must All Councils Be Chosen from the Vicinage? The rule that councils are to be chosen from the vicinage admits of important exceptions. There have been cases in which the churches of the vicinage were so related to the particular problem involved as to make it imperative that a considerable proportion of the churches should be chosen from a distance. The famous council called to consider the case of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, and its pastor, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, is an example. There are often reasons why a particular church at a distance should be invited. In this as in all matters of procedure, good common sense is good Congregational polity. At the time of the Episcopal defection in Connecticut, the letter of the Boston ministers to the distressed churches recommended a council, impartial, and not confined to the vicinity.

How May a Council Be Called? A council is called by the issuing of a Letter Missive. If such a letter is issued by a local church, the church must authorize it by a specific vote, naming the business for which the council is to be called and designating the persons who are to act for the church in the calling of the council.

What Should the Letter Missive Include? The letter missive, which is sent to each invited church and individual, should give, first, the name of the body inviting the council; secondly, the time and place of meeting; thirdly, the precise business to be presented to the body; fourthly, a full list of the churches and individuals who are to compose the council; fifthly, the signatures of the members of the committee calling the council. The letter missive should be sent out a sufficient time in advance to afford opportunity for the election of delegates and to give sufficient time for their attendance.

How May a Church Facilitate the Work of a Council? A church, having called a council, may greatly facilitate the work of that body by a few simple preliminaries.

It should be sure that its own records are in good condition, ready to be presented, and it should have an officer present, preferably the clerk, in charge of the records, ready to read them and to make any necessary explanation of them. If any formal memorial is to be presented, it may appoint a member to present it, and he will be heard by the council, not as a member of the council, but as a representative of the inviting church.

It should provide a supply of writing material for the scribe of the council, and this should be ready upon a table in front of the pulpit. It is not well to use the communion table for this or other common purposes. A package of slips or cards should be provided for balloting, and for the securing of names of members, in order to facilitate the making of the roll.

The church can greatly assist the scribe, also, if it will prepare a typewritten sheet with generous spaces, containing the form for the beginning of the work of the council, and another sheet with the list of the churches invited, plainly typewritten on the left, with space for two names on the right. The scribe of the council is often hurried in the opening minutes of the council, and the confusion of his records at the beginning often involves confusion throughout.

If an inexperienced person is chosen as scribe, he will find simple directions for the beginning of his work in Barton's Congregational Manual, pp. 255-257.

Who Compose the Membership of a Council? It is customary to invite each church to be represented by its pastor and a single delegate. This, however, is not a necessary or invariable custom. An invitation might be issued requesting the church to send to the council its pastor and two or three delegates. There is no fixed and necessary proportion between ministerial and lay members of a council, though the common custom is that each church shall be represented by its pastor and one lay delegate.

Cotton Mather shows that in his time there were fre-

quently as many as a half dozen delegates from each church, the pastor choosing one or more and the church electing others. There was a time in New England when churches resented being restricted in the number of delegates chosen. In a council in Dorderton, about 1794, each church had one to six delegates.

How Many Delegates. Samuel Mather informs us, that, in the synod of 1679, certain pastors were not allowed to sit till they had lay delegates to sit with them. John Wise maintains that ministers may be left out of the choice of delegates to council, if so their churches will. From Balch's Vindication of the Second Church in Bradford, it appears that the church, about 1746, sent to the ministers of one association with their churches to constitute a council. Mr. Davenport was invited to sit with the synod at Cambridge.—*Cummings:* Cong. Dict., Councils.

What Constitutes a Quorum? A majority of all invited churches constitutes a quorum. Quorums have sometimes been judged by the counting of individual members, but this is not good practice. A church accepting an invitation to a council is represented whether it sends its full delegation or not. Individuals invited to a council, though they have standing in the council, should not be counted in determining a quorum.

May Churches Invited to Council and Unable to Attend Diminish the Necessary Quorum? Where distances are great and the difficulty of securing a quorum is consequently considerable, it is permissible for a church receiving a letter missive and unable to attend, to communicate to the inviting church its regret, together with the request that its necessary absence be not permitted to militate against the securing of a quorum. Where such a request is made, there can be no valid objection to counting such a church out of the little majority which would be necessary to a quorum. Dr. Boynton has suggested, and quite properly, the inclusion of a sentence such as the following in the letter missive where such a condition is anticipated:

"We respectfully request that you would pass a vote agreeing that such churches as may be present in council, under this invitation,—a quorum being present, if not in

person, by the force of such votes duly received,—may be authorized to proceed with the work for which the council is called; and that you will transmit this vote at once to our church."

This is far better and safer than the plan proposed in the Boston Platform, which cannot be considered good Congregationalism:

"If a majority of the churches invited be not represented, those present ought not to proceed as a council, unless the party inviting consents."

How Is a Council Organized? The first step in the organization of a council is the reading of the letter missive. This is the official call of the council. The reading may be done by an officer of the inviting church, who therein welcomes the council and lays the business before it. This is a dignified way of opening a council, and worthy of more frequent usage. Commonly, however, the council is called to order by one of its members. A dignified and worthy custom has made the senior pastor present the natural person to perform this service. While the person calling the council to order, if a member of the council, does not thereby disqualify himself for permanent moderatorship, it should be understood that the reading of the letter missive is not the announcement of a candidacy for that office.

It is the duty of the reader of the letter missive to call for the election of a temporary scribe, and to determine whether a quorum is present. As this process usually involves the reading of the list of invited churches and individuals, it is desirable that the roll be made up at this time. It will insure accuracy in the recording of the names if cards are provided, and each member of the council record his name and the church he represents. It will also facilitate the determination of a quorum. As soon as it is determined that a quorum is present, a permanent moderator is to be elected. This may be done by ballot, and must be so done if any member of the council demands it, but a ballot

need not be insisted upon if there be no expressed desire for it.

What Are the Duties of the Moderator of a Council? The first duty of the permanent moderator is to lead the council in prayer. It is this prayer which constitutes the council. While the moderator may call upon some other member to perform this service, it is customary and desirable that the moderator himself offer the constituting prayer.

The next duty of the moderator is to call for the election of a permanent scribe. If the duties of the moderator or scribe are likely to be prolonged or arduous, the council may elect an assistant to either or both.

The next duty of the moderator is to call for the records relating to the call of the council. These should be submitted by the clerk of the church, or by some officer representing the body calling the council. This record should show distinctly the nature of the business named in the letter missive and the authority by which that business is submitted to the present council. If there is any doubt about the jurisdiction of the council, that question should be settled before the council proceeds.

The council being now assured of its own membership and of its jurisdiction, the moderator will call for the particular business for which the council has convened. The records having been presented, other documents and personal statements may be received until the whole matter which the council is to determine is fully set before it. This should be done as nearly as may be in regular and logical order, and after each part has been presented the council may at its discretion conclude that portion of its inquiry by a vote "that the papers and statements thus far submitted are deemed satisfactory." It should be understood, however, that such a vote does not determine any subsequent action of the council. It merely indicates that the council has heard all that appears to be available or all that it deems necessary at present upon that particular

point. It does not prevent the council from making any further inquiry if at a later stage it finds the matter submitted to it to be incomplete.

During this time the moderator's duty is that of an ordinary presiding officer, with somewhat more than usual freedom in the matter of directing the order of events. If the business of the council is the ordination of a candidate to the ministry, the moderator will commonly lead in the examination, or may designate some member to lead in the propounding of the questions. This he does, not to the exclusion of other members, all of whom have equal right with himself to participate in the examination, but as a matter of facilitating business and exercising the prerogative of a president.

It is the duty of the moderator also to preside at and conduct the public service; to announce to the congregation the decision of the council; and, in cases of ordination or installation, to lead in the public form of ritual, unless the council shall designate another member to perform those services.

The moderator can greatly facilitate the work of the council by keeping clearly in mind the simple outline of the work to be done, and that of his own part as leader. The moderator, as well as the scribe, should sign and certify all official documents emanating from the council.

What Is the Duty of the Scribe? It is the duty of the scribe of a council to keep the records of the council and the roll of its members, and at the close to complete the records and furnish copies signed by himself and the moderator to the inviting church and to all other parties uniting in the call of the council. It will greatly facilitate the work of the clerk if stationery is prepared in advance, as suggested in a previous section. But even where this is not done, the work of the scribe is not heavily burdensome if he does his work in a systematic way. It is his right to require that all lengthy motions should be submitted in writing.

The scribe should not be made a member of any committee.

The scribe should do his work so thoroughly that he can have his records in order and ready to be read and approved at the close of the executive session of the council.

For further suggestions to the scribe of a council the reader is referred to the author's Congregational Manual, pp. 255-258.

Does Irregularity in Invitation Invalidate the Council? Irregularities in letters missive or in the records of the churches calling the council will frequently be found, but not every such irregularity invalidates the council. It is for the council itself to determine whether an irregularity in the form of the proceeding or of the call is of such a character as to invalidate the call. Where a council has been called in good faith and there is no indication that any party will suffer wrong through a technical irregularity, a council should not be invalidated on account of an inadvertent error of a minor sort.

What Is the Place of Individual Members in a Council? It is customary to invite to a council individual members in addition to the delegates from the church. In centers where a considerable number of ordained professors, secretaries, editors and other ministers without pastoral charge are living, the number of such individuals sometimes constitutes a very large proportion of the council. This ought not to be so. The number of individuals especially invited should be few in proportion to the representatives of the churches. It is the churches who are to assume responsibility for the finding of the council. Individuals who are desired, should, as a rule, be secured through election by their own churches. In a paper by Dr. Hazen, in National Council Minutes of 1898, this principle is emphasized. He declares that if an individual is greatly desired, either because he is to preach a sermon or to furnish expert advice, such cases should be limited to very special exceptions and never multiplied for merely honorary recognition.

Of the Place of Ministers in Councils. Not their office, but their delegation, gives them power to be members of synods; . . . none ought to be admitted to such assemblies but those whom the churches shall send. . . . So, in ecclesiastical councils, not only the officers but others may receive a commission from the churches, and then have equal power with the pastor.—*Increase Mather:* Order of the Gospel Justified.

Pastor and Delegate. The churches invited to assist in a council are represented by messengers or delegates chosen by them for the particular occasion. By ancient usage, the pastor of a church, having been duly recognized as its presiding elder or bishop, is always expected to be one of its messengers; and the letters convening the council invite each church to be represented by its pastor and delegates. Yet, in the council, when convened, there is no distinction of authority between pastors and other delegates.—Boston Platform, 1865, Part III, chp. xxi, 2.

May Non-Congregationalists Be Invited to a Council? The inviting of an individual, or even of a church, other than Congregational, does not invalidate a council. If the son of a Methodist minister were to be ordained by a Congregational council, it would be proper to invite his father as an individual member of the council. If it were proposed to organize a Congregational church in a given district, it might be not only courteous but desirable that the neighboring Presbyterian church should be invited to the council.

Are Individual Members Always Ministers? The liberty of inviting individual members is not restricted to ministers. A distinguished layman may sometimes properly be invited. For instance, the president of the American Board might with propriety be invited to a council called to ordain a missionary, even though the local church of which he was a member were quite outside the circle of invited churches. The president of the college of which the candidate is an alumnus may properly be included in a letter missive for ordination. But there is manifest reason why less freedom should be exercised in inviting lay than ministerial individuals to councils. A minister, even when invited as an individual, still retains something of a representative character in a church council. His office makes him a part of the organic life of the denomination. Laymen when invited as individuals are practically certain to be

chosen for personal reasons. No council should be composed of a preponderance of individuals; and there are good reasons why few laymen are invited as individual members of councils.

Have Individuals Any Standing in Council? There does not appear to be any Congregational authority whatever for the particular church that assembles the council to invite individuals to sit and act in the same, in their own persons and right, and not as the representatives of sister churches.—*Upham:* Ratio Disciplinæ, pp. 126-127.

Is a Council Composed Wholly of Ministers Valid? It is. A church may invite a council of ministers, and if their churches authorize them to act, the council is as valid as any other. But a council of individual ministers, responding personally to a letter missive not submitted to their respective churches for action, would have no authority. It might act as a board of arbitration, or give advice according to its wisdom, but it would not be an ecclesiastical council.

Is a Council of Laymen Valid? It is. A church may invite a council requesting the invited churches to send one or more delegates, men of business experience and wisdom in practical affairs. If the churches accept the invitation and elect a council of laymen, the finding of the council will be valid.

Such councils, however, are unusual. It is desirable that they be infrequent. The ideal council is composed of both ministers and lay delegates from the churches.

Laymen and Ministers in Council. There is Weight in Austin's Argument, viz. That the power of the Keyes belongs to the whole church; And that therefore not the Pastors only should have their voice in Councils. Since Councils represent the Churches by whom they are Chosen, it is meet that some of each order should be chosen. Church-members are fellow Citizens, and therefore ought not to be deprived of their power.

It is not their Office but the Churches Delegation that giveth power to be the members in Synods. The Specificating act in which Synodal power and so the right of a Decisive Vote is sounded, is the Churches Delegation. None ought to be Admitted into such Assemblies, but those whom the Churches shall send.—*Increase Mather:* The Order of the Gospel, Boston, 1700, pp. 85, 86.

Should a Council Be Called for Licensure? A council is not a suitable body to consider the question of licensure. A licentiate should be under the permanent care of an Association during the period of his candidacy for the ministry. A council called to ordain a man and finding him not qualified, may commend him to the District Association for licensure, but should on no account presume to issue a certificate of licensure.

Council for Licensure. A council is not the proper body to license or approve a candidate for the ministry, because this is not an ecclesiastical act, but only a nomination, as a basis for ecclesiastical action, and because a license is given for a limited period to be renewed or not by the body giving it, and a council is not a continuous body and so cannot issue or refuse such a renewal.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 104.

May the Council Examine When Not Invited So to Do? Churches have been known to withhold from letters missive any invitation to the invited council to examine the candidate or the records of the church. The inviting church has a right to limit the action of the council in this way, if it chooses, and the churches have the right to say whether they will accept such an invitation. A notable instance was that of the Old South Church in Boston, in a service in 1884. The letter missive contained no invitation to examine the candidate. It read: "You are hereby cordially invited to participate by pastor and a delegate in the proceeding of the council when the action of the church and society and the correspondence in connection with the call will be read before you, and the pastor elect will make a statement of his religious beliefs, preparatory to the usual service in the evening." The reservation in this letter missive was made with intent, as there was some reason to anticipate that not all the members of the council would approve the theological views of the candidate. The letter missive virtually served notice on the churches invited that the inviting church retained the right to install its pastor elect even if the council did not approve. But even in this case there was no attempt to restrict the liberty of the

council in the matter of examination. The pastor elect presented his paper, and the examination which followed was a very thorough one.

In other cases the expression, "to examine the candidate," has been intentionally omitted from the letter missive, and the reservation implied in that omission is within the prerogative of the inviting church. However, it does not follow that the council has no right to ask questions. Reasonable questions are still in order. If the council is to express any judgment of the action of the church, the members of the council have the right to call for the essential facts on which to base their judgment. The church or candidate may decline to answer reasonable questions, but if so, the council has the equal privilege of declining to approve the action of the church because of the withholding of the information which the council had the right to expect.

Limitation of Council. Occasionally a church has sent out a letter missive for a service of installation in which it has not distinctly asked the council to satisfy itself by examination in regard to the matters involved before voting to co-operate. If the invited churches believe that they are not asked to examine the case before them and give their advice and assistance with freedom, they should decline the invitation; it would not be to a Congregational council. If, however, as has usually been the case, the inviting church does not intend to limit the churches so that their only possible action is that of acquiescence, and on the clear understanding that a Congregational council can only be asked to advise and to act its free pleasure, the mere variation in the form of the invitation should not invalidate the call or at all affect the proceedings of the council. The letter ought, however, expressly to submit the matters involved for examination, and ask for advice and co-operation. If that is not desired, a council should not be called, or, if called, the invitation should be declined. It is too late, however, to find fault with the letter after accepting the invitation which it contains.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 108.

Dr. Boynton is not quite accurate in saying that "it is too late to find fault." The council may find fault, and not only so, may refuse in such a case to go forward. But this will not ordinarily be necessary.

What Are Reasonable Limits in Examination of a Candidate? The candidate presenting himself for ordination or installation must expect to assure the council of his

Christian experience, call to preach, and record in the ministry. Any question is in order which will help the council to a decision concerning these matters. In case of installation, some things may be taken for granted which are proper matters of inquiry in the ordination service. A man who has been working successfully in the ministry, and who brings with him satisfactory credentials, may indeed expect to be questioned, but not as if he were applying for a license to preach, or even for ordination.

The minister himself, and the church calling him, has the right to expect that his years of service will count for something and that the form of the examination will be such as to recognize the standing he already has attained in the ministry.

Installation is no longer re-ordination, nor is a service of examination provided as a means of gratifying an unreasonable curiosity concerning irrelevant or trivial matters of opinion.

A council should not be permitted to degenerate into a debating club, or an arena in which a candidate is subjected to torture for the amusement of delegates holding theological eccentricities.

Is a Council a Court? A council is not a court. In the felicitous language of Dr. Dexter, "it is the affectionate persuasive presence of near friends, tenderly concerned to have all that is unclear clarified and all that is selfish or exorbitant, or only misunderstood or misdone, readjusted into the harmony of absolute right" (Congregationalism as Seen in Its Literature, p. 691).

Yet there is an important sense in which the council in Congregationalism becomes a court of last resort; and this was recognized by the National Council in 1886.

Force of Council Decrees. The doctrine which is maintained by those who follow the language of Rev. Samuel Mather, in his "Apology for the Liberties of the Churches of New England," that councils can neither pretend to nor desire any power that is juridical; that, "when they have done all, the churches are still free to accept or refuse their advice"—has too often been made a pretense for self-will and disorderly conduct. The decrees of

such councils as have had the reasonableness that is secured by purity of motive, dispassionateness of judgment, wisdom in adapting means to ends, have seldom been wanting in both the appearance and the reality of force.—*Ladd:* Principles of Church Polity, p. 297.

Is a Council an Appellate Body? Appeal may be made to a council; yet the Congregational spirit is not favorable to a system of appeals from lower to higher authority. Local differences are to be settled locally; and when there is need of advice it is given on request by churches and brethren near at hand and interested in the peace and good name of the churches, and not carried on and up through a long series of courts to prolonged and possibly hopeless disagreement. In the matter of appeals, Cummings thus summarizes our older authorities:

John Davenport shows in his "Power of Congregational Churches," that they are endless in the practical application; for, if the principle is once admitted, there is no consistent stopping-place short of a general ecumenical council, which may not assemble for an age. Richard Mather and W. Tompson (Hanbury, ii, p. 65) press the same argument concerning appeals to discipline churches. John Wise ("Vindication," p. 54), doubtless referring to Matt. 18, says: "There is apparently some great fallacy in the objection (i. e., to the ultimate power resting in the church), or certainly our blessed Saviour did not state his cases right." . . . Dr. Emmons ("Platform," "Works," v, p. 454) says: "Christ here gives no direction to the censured person to appeal to any higher tribunal, . . . nor to the church to call a council for advice. The censured person has no right of appeal, . . . because there is no higher tribunal on earth to which he can appeal. . . . There must be a final decision, and the church must make it." His reasoning looks like not allowing the aggrieved a right to seek admission to other churches; but this was not probably his meaning.—*Cummings:* Cong. Dict., Appeals.

Council a Court of Last Resort. If we need a safeguard against other polities, here is one. The Presbyterian may carry his troubles up the line, to presbytery, synod and assembly, and accept the results formulated in the distant judicatories. The Congregationalist turns back to the local churches whose fraternal advice is his final dependence. As long as this method of appeal stands, a drift into other polities is blocked. Equally blocked is a tendency into any sort of perilous centralization. We may freely develop the local association, only keeping the council behind it as court of appeal. This turn is pivotal in our polity; upon it we swing back to the *pro re nata* action of the churches. And should the council come to be mainly limited to this function of appeal, it would therein retain eminence and power such as should satisfy its most jealous advocates.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, pp. 97-98.

What Are the Sessions of a Council? The sessions of a council are of three kinds: the opening business session, the executive session, and the public session.

(a) The Opening Business Session. The purpose of the opening business session is one of inquiry. The council should hear in the presence of all interested parties a full statement of the business to come before it. When it has heard all that it judges to be pertinent thereto, it is common to vote that the council be by itself. The successive votes taken by the council in its opening business session, "That the papers thus far be deemed satisfactory," should not be understood as opening to discussion the main question for which the council is called. Members of the council have been known to err on this point. If, for instance, a candidate for the ministry has submitted a certificate of his church membership, of his college and seminary graduation, of his licensure, and of his call, the council may very properly entertain a motion that the papers thus far be deemed satisfactory. That, however, is no time for some enthusiastic friend of the candidate to offer an eulogy upon him or to discuss the question of his ordination. It is not good form for members of the council to attempt to anticipate its finding by remarks upon routine motions of this character. The purpose of the public session is to get all the facts before the body in the most prompt and orderly manner possible, and it is a discourtesy to the council for one of its members to use this session as an opportunity for discussions which should be in private.

(b) The Executive Session of the Council. It is customary and eminently proper that the council should retire and consider the business before it in executive session. Even where there can be no reasonable doubt of the action of the council, it is orderly and according to usage that the representatives of the churches should give calm and judicial attention to the business on which they are called, and that this should be done in a room where they may speak in perfect freedom and apart from the possible embarrass-

ment of interested parties. The council being by itself should proceed as directly as may be to the consideration of the business that has been presented to it. It does this upon a motion. If its business is the ordination of a minister, the form of the first motion usually is, "That the examination be sustained." This motion opens the whole question of the examination for discussion. It is customary to give every member opportunity to participate. Sometimes this is done by the calling of the roll for a yea and nay vote, each member being permitted to speak briefly as he casts his vote. Whatever the nature of the business, it should be considered in order, and the full will of the council expressed upon a definite motion.

The council having determined what it will do, it is customary to appoint a committee to formulate its judgment. This is done in an official document called "The Finding of the Council." In case of ordination or installation, the finding is usually presented in the form of an order of public service, which is submitted for adoption. In case of dismission, the finding is in the form of resolutions commending the retiring pastor and the church. These resolutions are not mere matters of courtesy; they form a part of the permanent records of the church, and are an essential credential of the retiring pastor.

While the committee is out conferring with the pastor elect or the church committee, or formulating its finding, the council may review its own records, correct its roll, and have its work in order.

The report of the committee, which may be expected by the time the records are read and approved, will complete the records up to this point, and the council may take recess until the public service, if one is to follow, or may complete its work and dissolve.

It is usual to vote, "That the scribe have authority to complete the records, and that at the close of the public service the moderator declare the council dissolved."

This formal motion is not strictly necessary, and where it is inadvertently omitted these officers are free to consider these duties among their necessary prerogatives.

(c) The Public Session. The public session is not an invariable part of the proceedings of a council, for a council is called merely for advice and gives that advice through the adoption of a formal resolution to be entered upon the records of a church or delivered to the parties calling the council. It is not always necessary, and it often is not desirable, that there be a public service, but in cases involving the recognition of a church, or the ordination or installation of a minister, and in many other instances, it is eminently fitting that the work of the council conclude with a public service, wherein the finding shall be read and the congregation publicly apprised of what the council has done; and thus the council may properly close with dignified public exercises.

Should Councils Vote by Churches? Rarely is there so sharp a difference of opinion in councils that a vote would be modified if taken by churches instead of by individuals. Yet if such a situation should arise, it would be in order to insist that a council of churches should record its vote by churches, the pastor and delegate, if both are present, agreeing in their vote, or dividing if they are unable to agree, and leaving the decision to the churches that have a united judgment.

How Should a Council Be Addressed? If a church or an individual has occasion to address a formal communication to a council, the proper form is not, "To the Honorable Council," or "We petition your Honorable Body," that form of address belonging to political and judicial bodies. The correct form is, "To the Venerable Council" and "We petition your Venerable Body."

What Is the Finding of a Council? The official judgment of a council on a matter submitted to it is known as "the finding." This is commonly formulated by a com-

mittee after the council has expressed its general judgment by the adoption of a motion. The vote by which the council determines what it will do is commonly a general vote, as "That the examination be sustained," or "That the council approve the dissolution of the pastoral relation," or "That the council finds that the Rev. John Doe has been guilty of conduct unbecoming a minister of the gospel." A simple motion of this kind brings before the council directly the main question which has brought it together, and if the motion prevail the principal point is settled. However, there is often something more to be said. If the council be called to dissolve a pastorate, the retiring pastor may deserve a resolution of commendation, or the church may need advice, or in case some one has misbehaved the precise ground of disapproval should be stated with precision and care. A committee to formulate the finding is exceedingly valuable in such a case. The vote which the council has taken declares the thing which the council wants to do, and the discussion later indicates the general sentiment of the council in the matter. A committee can formulate this finding and present it to the council in shape for discussion, amendment and adoption. This finding, having been adopted, becomes the official statement of the council's judgment in the premises.

Is the Decision of a Council Binding Upon the Parties Calling It? In theory, the finding of a council has only so much force as there is force in the reason of it, and may freely be disregarded by the parties calling the council. The early decisions of the courts following this theory were generally to the effect that a council cannot enforce its finding. There is, however, a manifest and exceedingly important exception to this rule, namely, that when any vote or agreement is made conditional upon the approval of a council, the finding of a council in that case is final. A church which invites a council to examine a candidate for its pastorate cannot proceed to ordain the candidate if the council refuses to do so. It can call another council and

carry through its will in this manner, but if it does so the churches acting through the association may refuse to recognize the finding of the "packed" council as valid. So long as the matter submitted to the council affects only the church or parties inviting the council, the advice may be freely disregarded, unless there has been a previous pledge to abide by the finding of a council. But when the action affects the welfare of the churches as a whole, the churches have an indubitable right to make their will effective in those matters which concern the common good. When, therefore, a council is called and the parties calling it agree to abide by its finding or make an action contingent upon the approval of the council, the finding of the council is virtually final and will be recognized by the courts, provided it can be shown that the council acted within its jurisdiction.

The literature on the authority of councils is voluminous, and the historic decision is that, except as above stated, the finding of councils has advisory weight only.

No Jurisdiction Over Local Churches. Christ has not subjected any church or congregation to any other superior ecclesiastical jurisdiction than that which is within itself; . . . no other churches or spiritual officers have power to censure or punish them, but only to counsel and advise them.—*Bradshaw:* English Puritanism, ii, 4.

There is no jurisdiction, to which particular churches are or ought to be subject, by way of authoritative censure.—*Hutchinson:* History of Mass., Vol. I, p. 371.

Our churches acknowledge no jurisdiction of sister churches over them, but hold themselves to be capable, and to have the power, to determine all matters of discipline that arise in a particular church. The moment jurisdiction enters, like creating Cæsar perpetual dictator, the beginning of the absolute loss of liberty commences. . . . The exigencies of the Christian church can never be such as to legitimate, much less to render it wise, to erect any body of men into a standing judicatory over them.—*Stiles:* Convention Sermon, 45 et seq.

Where a church wants light, she should send for counsel, but preserve the power entirely in her own hands, where Christ has placed it.—*Davenport:* Power of Congregational Churches.

The power of councils is merely advisory; nor can they volunteer that service. They cannot come till they are asked, nor extend their inquiries beyond the point submitted.—*Judge Haven:* Dedham Case, 1819.

Churches reserve to themselves to refuse or accept the advice of

council: . . . Congregational churches universally hold a negative on the result of council. . . . The decision of council is of no force, till received and ratified by the inviting church, nor does it render that church obnoxious to community if she recedes from advice of council.—*Stiles:* Convention Sermon, pp. 46-48.

May Churches Agree to Accept Advice? Bliss, in his History of Rehoboth, shows that the parties bound themselves beforehand to abide the result of council relative to the dismission of Mr. Carnes in 1763. This is the earliest instance which I have noticed, save the cases to which John White alludes in his Lamentations in Wise's Quarrel, p. 165.—*Cummings:* Cong. Dict., Councils.

Are Councils More than Advisory? The affirmation so often made, and stoutly insisted upon, that the action of a council is advisory only, calls for important qualification. In many matters, even where there is no agreement to abide by the finding of the council, its result is necessarily final.

Standing in Civil Courts. The result of a council is in many cases necessarily only advisory, and a church may decline to act in accordance with it without incurring censure, but in some cases the result is necessarily conclusive. Thus, a council called to act upon the proposed ordination of a minister, and proceeding to ordain him, of course determines the question. A council called with power to declare the dissolution of a pastoral relation can decide imperatively, but such power is seldom given. The courts in Massachusetts, and also in some other states, have recognized the existence of councils as a part of our polity, and have declared that when a council is impartially selected, and proceeds according to the ordinary principles of fairness, either party accepting the result of such council will be sustained by law in cases within the cognizance of law.—*Alonzo H. Quint:* in Dunning's Congregationalists in America, p. 497.

May a Council Adjourn? A council may adjourn when its business is not completed, but it does not often do so, and as a rule should not. A council "takes recess" between sessions, usually on the same day, or on successive days, attending to its business until its work is done. At the close of its work it either adjourns without date or more properly dissolves. Either form of motion is in order, but the motion "That the council do now dissolve" is in better form than "That the council adjourn without day." The reason is that adjournment in any form is suggestive of continuity of service, and is more or less foreign to the idea of a council.

Occasions sometimes arise which call for the adjournment of a council. For instance, a church calls a council to advise it in the matter of its proposed disbanding. The general evidence presented to the council indicates that the church cannot longer be maintained, yet a few brave souls ask for two weeks in which to make an earnest canvass to rally the support both of members and of money for the maintenance of the church. The council may very properly heed their request and lend them whatever encouragement it deems wise in their undertaking.

Quite of another sort is the adjournment some councils have been known to take. They have completed their work, adopted their finding, and then adjourned to see whether that finding was followed. In one case, a council publicly adjourned, but privately agreed that it would come together on call if its finding did not settle the difficulty; and in the course of a month the council re-convened on its own initiative. It hardly need be said that the second session of this council was entirely without authority and its finding null and void.

How Are Councils Classified? The ordinary ecclesiastical council, if given a name at all, takes its name from the business it is called to transact, as "an ordaining council," or "a dismissing council," or sometimes "a council of ordination" or "of dismission." Where two parties representing diverse interests join in calling a council, it is called a "mutual council." A council called to give advice on matters other than the foregoing is commonly called "an advisory council." Where a council is called by a single party, but where only one side of a grievance is represented in the call, it is called "an *ex-parte* council."

Dr. Ross held that there should also be "*uni parte* councils" in which there is no opposition, or other party in agreement; and "*duo parte* councils," inclusive of councils of ordination, installation, dismission or recognition; that is, a council called by two parties in agreement, but these

terms have not made their way into common usage (Church-Kingdom, p. 275).

What Is a Mutual Council? A mutual council is a council called by two or more parties representing diverse interests. A council called by two churches for an object where the interests of the two are identical is not, strictly speaking, a mutual council. For instance, two yoked churches uniting in a single service of ordination call a single ordaining council. A council of dismission joined in by the pastor and the church is not a mutual council where the two are in complete agreement. A council called by a church and one or more aggrieved members is a mutual council. A council called by two churches, one of which has received into membership an expelled member of the other, is a mutual council. A council called by a church and its pastor involving a difference of opinion is a mutual council. Where there is a mutual council the two parties agree in the selection of the churches invited, and usually agree to abide by the decision of the council. This commonly was not the case in earlier times. Mutual councils then gave their advice and both parties could accept it, or one could accept it and the other reject it, or both could reject it as they saw fit. It is not now generally considered a courtesy to the churches to call them to a mutual council except on an agreement to abide by their decision. In this respect there has been a marked change in the character of mutual councils, for they are usually bodies of arbitration whose finding is accepted in advance as an essential element in their call. This, however, is not necessary to the character of a mutual council, which may be called for advice only, leaving both parties entirely and independently free.

What Is an Ex-Parte Council? An *ex-parte* council is a council called in a matter that would be submitted to a mutual council if all the parties involved would agree to the call of a mutual council, but in which one or more of them refuses. In such a case an *ex-parte* council is called, in order that an ecclesiastical body representing the

churches may contribute the weight of its judgment to the attempt to adjust a grievance.

Ex-parte councils are governed by the same general laws that apply to other councils, but have a few special rules growing out of their public nature. The first and fundamental rule of an *ex-parte* council is that, being organized, it shall carefully consider whether the difficulty is one which an *ex-parte* council can reasonably hope to assist. If the injury complained of is a purely local one, whose results lie entirely within the local church, a council cannot properly be called and should refuse to act. The assistance of the churches in their organic unity should be invoked only in matters that transcend local limits. For instance, if a church member has been privately censured by his church, but not publicly condemned, and his membership remains intact, he cannot call an *ex-parte* council to adjust what he deems a grievance that is purely local in its character. If an *ex-parte* council has convened and organized, and finds that the occasion of its call is of any such nature as this, it should promptly decide that it has no jurisdiction in the premises, and convey this finding to the parties calling it.

As soon as an *ex-parte* council is organized, and finds, or apears to find, that the matter concerning which it is called is one over which it has jurisdiction, its very next duty is to offer itself as a mutual council. In order to accomplish this highly desirable result, it should urge upon the party calling it all reasonable concessions. Its findings can have no weight whatever unless its records show that it has exhausted all reasonable effort to induce both parties to join the council. If it can accomplish this result it ceases to be an *ex-parte* council and becomes a mutual council.

If an *ex-parte* council utterly fails to induce both parties to join in it and finds reason to believe that there is a grievance deserving of its investigation and not remediable through any other course, it may proceed in the light of such evidence as it has, investigate as fully as it is able to

do all the issues involved, and give such advice as the premises seem to warrant.

There is one other special rule of *ex-parte* councils, which is in its nature an exception to all ordinary rules governing the call of councils, and this is given under the caption, "May a council increase or diminish its own membership?"

Ex-Parte Council. The churches of New England have a remedy for oppression, that is to say, a council. If the church refuse to call a council, the aggrieved may do it without them, only informing them what he does. If they find the person to have suffered palpable injury, they endeavor to convince the church. If the church refuse, they order that the person be admitted to some other church in the neighborhood, and so to communion with them all.—*Cotton Mather:* Ratio Disciplinæ, p. 158.

Difference of Opinion No Ground for Ex-Parte Council. Nothing is more common in a church than for a minority which is simply thwarted in some cherished purpose because it is not the majority, but which has suffered no impairment of rights, to propose to the majority to leave their "difficulties" to a council, and, when the proposition has been declined, to fancy they have a good case for one *ex-parte.* They have no case at all. The church has no right to ask other churches to do what is its own proper work, and the "aggrieved" have no grievance which concerns other churches, because their relations with them remain what they always have been. Of course any church which desires advice has always the right to ask for it. But for a church simply to decline to ask advice when some members wish to have advice taken, is in itself no sufficient ground for the calling of an *ex-parte* council. It is almost always wise, however, for a church to grant a mutual council.—*Dexter:* Handbook, p. 119.

May a Council Increase or Diminish Its Own Membership? A council may not increase or diminish its own membership. The full list of members invited to the council should be sent to the churches with the letter missive. The list of invited churches is a part of the invitation on the basis of which the churches agree to be present in the council. A council may not elect corresponding members as an Association does. It may permit a visiting brother to speak, but not as a member of the council. It may invite a visiting minister to participate in the public service, but his act in such a service is performed in his capacity as a minister of the gospel and not as a member of the council.

The rule that a council's membership cannot be changed is, with a single exception, an invariable one. There should be reason in all things, and this rule should not be so enforced as to forbid correction of a mere clerical error, but even such an error should not be allowed to stand if there is any serious question of intent which might invalidate the finding of the council. If a court were called to review the finding of a council and it were shown that the council had increased its membership, the court would almost certainly decide that the council was irregular and its finding invalid.

There is only one exception to the rule that a council may not change its membership. That exception is important, and should be noted. When an *ex-parte* council is offering its services as a mutual council, if the other party objects to the council as constituted but is willing to accept it if there be added to its membership one or more churches or ministers in good and regular standing, and the party inviting the council accepts and the *ex-parte* council joins in the acceptance of the added members, the *ex-parte* council in re-organizing as a mutual council may thus increase its membership. On the same principle, if one member of the *ex-parte* council were strongly objected to as being violently prejudiced and he were willing to withdraw from the council for the sake of making it acceptable to the hitherto unwilling party, the council might change its membership by the omission of his name, but this could only be done where all parties were agreed to it, including the member withdrawing. If he, or his church, insisted upon his right to remain in the council, that right would have to be conceded.

Is the Conciliar System an Adequate Protection of Our Churches? The conciliar system is a useful system, but standing alone is not an adequate protection of our churches. President Nash has called attention in forceful words to the peril of councils of ordination apart from the action of responsible and permanent bodies:

> Over some case of ministerial delinquency or impotence we ask, Who ordained this man? A council in Northeastern Maine or

Southwestern California. Write that council and charge back its blunder upon it; bid it recall those ordination papers and terminate the mischievous or ineffective career. Impossible; the deed was done by an agency irresponsible, created for the work of an hour with endless consequences, and falling apart before sunset.—Congregational Administration, p. 92.

If the conciliar system is to be retained as an integral part of our Congregational system, it must be strengthened and compassed with checks and balances by authority delegated by the churches to their permanent representative bodies, especially to the District Association. For a full discussion of the merits of the conciliar system, with some predictions for its growth which have not been as yet fulfilled, the reader is referred to the able paper on "The Future of Ecclesiastical Councils" by Rev. Henry A. Hazen, Secretary of the National Council, in the Records of the Council of 1898, p. 166.

The Future of Ecclesiastical Councils. Ecclesiastical councils are among the most characteristic and logical products of our American Congregationalism. Our fundamental postulate, the independence of the local church, subject to no higher authority than that of the Master, necessitates a doctrine of fellowship, which shall set these churches in a practical and working harmony. Without this the unfriendly taunt of the "rope of sand" would have some foundation, and we should be properly a laughing stock to our neighbors, who cultivate a more highly developed ecclesiasticism. As has been wisely said more than once, independence and fellowship are the foci of our ellipse; one is not more fundamental than the other.

Of the fellowship of the churches, our system of ecclesiastical councils was, for two hundred years, the chief form of expression. Through this the churches touched hands and came into step with each other. In true neighborly fashion they shared each other's joys and helped each other in trial and difficulty. When a new church was organized, when a pastor was ordained, installed, or dismissed, or when any complication arose, significant enough to justify the hearing and advice of sister churches, they answered each other's call, and gave such fraternal expression to their common interest and life, as cemented their relations, and gave them vitality and power in their common service of the Master.

When the population increased, the means of communication multiplied, and neighbors were not so far apart, the churches, naturally, sought other and ampler forms for expressing their fellowship. Practically, through their various missionary societies, and more formally through conferences and associations, they have organized their fellowship, until the ecclesiastical council, instead of being its chief form of expression, has taken comparatively a secondary place.

But these later organs of fellowship, while healthfully supplementing, cannot supersede the ecclesiastical council. We cannot transfer the functions of councils to associations and conferences without setting up an ecclesiastical organism which would imperil our liberties. Such permanent bodies, if entrusted with the functions of councils, ordination and installation of ministers, their dismission, and the advising of the churches in such cases of difficulty as are always sure to arise while men and women remain imperfectly sanctified, would acquire a perilous taste of power. The appetite, as human nature is, would grow with what it fed upon, and we should soon have tribunals setting up authority and issuing edicts to which the churches would be expected to bow. But the council is a safe depository of these functions. When its result is reached and its advice given it disappears. There is no standing moderator or committee to enforce its edicts or call the churches to account for disregard of them. Its result has just so much force as lies in the reason of it; and in this, its appeal to reason and sound common sense is one of the chief characteristics and bulwarks of our Congregationalism. The evanescence of the council is the strength of the conciliary system. The council comes, does its work, and disappears. One council is not and cannot be a stepping-stone to another, and the liberties of the churches are just as safe after its adjournment as before it convened.

First, then, I affirm, what my subject implies, a future for our conciliary system. It is not outworn or decadent. Its functions, in safeguarding the character and standing of the ministry, and the peace of the churches, are likely to be as important in the future as in the past. It will remain the most feasible, the most pliable, and the safest agency through which the churches can secure the important results for which they have looked to this system. Modern methods and appliances have no tendency to displace it.—*Henry A. Hazen*, in National Council Minutes, 1898.

How May the Churches Control a Council? Strictly construed, the status of individual members of a council ought to be that of honorary members, but the custom of inviting such members has been of gradual growth, and it has seemed invidious to rule against them, or to make any distinction between them and those members who represent the churches. An instance has been known in a time of theological uncertainty in which a church, desiring to ordain a member for foreign missionary service, called a council in which a clear majority of the members invited, and a majority of the council as the roll was made, consisted of individuals, most of whom were either missionaries or officers of the missionary society under which the member proposed to labor. Such a council may be called, and if the churches invited accept the invitation, its finding is valid.

But if a clear line of division should arise, the members representing the churches on the one side, and the individual members on the other, the former have one remedy against being outvoted by the individual members present. That remedy is that the delegates from churches may leave in a body, and remain absent till the individuals in the council come to terms. Individual members do not count in the making of a quorum. The members who represent churches can leave such a council without a quorum.

XVII. THE DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

What Is an Association? An association is a body composed of the Congregational churches and ministers of a given district or territory, voluntarily associated for Christian fellowship and the transaction of the common business of the churches and ministers composing it. As such it is authorized to represent the churches in the ordination, installation, dismission, discipline, and deposition of ministers. The Association is the depository of ministerial standing of all pastors of churches within its bounds, and of ministers not in pastoral service who are members of said churches. It may be an incorporated body, capable of holding property for the general interests of the churches composing it. It may possess also the powers of a standing council, exercising the same either through the whole body of its membership or through an advisory committee elected by and responsible to the Association. It is a delegate body, composed ordinarily of one pastor and one or more delegates from each constituent church, and having in addition a ministerial membership composed of pastors and other ministers within its bounds.

As thus constituted, the Association has many of the powers belonging to the Consociation of Connecticut, and includes the functions which in some of the older states were divided between Associations of Pastors and Conferences of Churches.

It will be interesting and profitable to compare at this point the exceedingly brief treatment of Associations and Conferences as the functions of these were interpreted by Dr. Dexter.

Associations. An Association is a meeting of pastors in the aim to help each other in their common work. Such meetings have existed in New England since a very early date. The pastors of ten, twenty, or thirty neighboring churches—grouped, and limited, by considerations of mutual convenience—come together thus, twice, thrice, or four times a year, and spend a day, or more, in exercises for intellectual, spiritual, and professional improvement.

As a matter of convenience, advantage has been taken of these regular assemblages of the pastors, by candidates for the pulpit, to present themselves, after thorough training, for examination for a certificate of approval—in common parlance, "for licensure."

In some of the states, delegates from these district bodies meet once a year to constitute a General Association of the state; the printed report of whose annual meeting is made to include the statistics of the Congregational churches in that commonwealth.

While these Associations are very helpful to pastors, and through them to their flocks, it is a fundamental principle, usually, if not universally, expressed in their constitutions, that they have no direct connection with the churches, and no claim to any shadow of authority over them.

Conferences. A Conference is an assemblage of pastors and delegates of churches, assembled, not, like a council, on the special call of a sister church for some isolated service toward light and peace, but in virtue of a constitution providing for periodical meetings, for mutual prayer, communion, advice, and helpfulness. As in the case of Pastoral Associations, the size, boundaries, etc., of these Conferences, are dictated by convenience.

As with Associations, a distinct disavowal of all ecclesiastical control is usually, and very properly, a fundamental article of their confederation.

In some of the states, delegations from these local conferences meet annually in a General Conference representing all the Congregational churches in the state; and their minutes carry the annual statistics.—*Dexter:* Congregationalism, pp. 226-227.

The foregoing represents what passed for good Congregationalism, but ought never to have been accounted such in its own day, and now may be regarded as thoroughly obsolete. An Association of ministers existing as a voluntary club ought never to have exercised the function, and never properly could have exercised the right, of licensing candidates for the ministry. No body, of whatever men composed, should be entrusted with so important a duty if it counts it "a fundamental principle, usually if not universally expressed in the constitution, that they have no direct connection with the churches."

In certain of the older states where such Associations existed and have now become an organic part of the Associations of churches covering the same territory, the Association of churches has constituted the Association of ministers its committee on licensure. This is an orderly procedure, but in all such cases the authority resides, and should reside, with the churches.

Nor would it any longer be regarded as orderly for a State Conference to be composed of delegates from local Conferences or District Associations. The churches have a right to direct representation in their state, as truly as in their district, bodies.

It will therefore appear on careful study that the newer Congregationalism, so far as it relates to Associations of churches and ministers, is more truly Congregational than that of Dexter's day, but in it the Association of churches has risen to new dignity and cannot be dismissed in a single brief paragraph chiefly concerned with setting forth the things which the associated churches may not do.

As the local church has its own autonomy and all rights belonging to it as a local body are jealously to be guarded, so the churches in their district grouping have an autonomy. There are certain matters wherein the autonomy of the group is quite as sacred as the autonomy of the local congregation. There are cases wherein it becomes the duty of the Association by virtue of its own autonomy to protect the churches at large, for instance, against an unworthy minister, who might be retained through the wilfulness of the dominating faction in a single local church; but the Association can do nothing that in any way limits the autonomy of the local church acting within and for itself.

A local church may elect a notoriously unworthy man to be its pastor, and the Association cannot displace him from that position, but it can refuse to admit him to its own membership, and can proceed thus in the exercise of its own autonomy:

(a) The Association can bracket the name of such a minister as it appears in the pastor's column in its own statistics and in the Year Book opposite the name of said church.

(b) It can omit his name altogether if it has deposed him from the ministry.

(c) It can give the said minister only the standing of a layman if he appears as a representative of the church in

any meeting of the Association; and can refuse the church other lay representation.

(d) It can withdraw fellowship from said church altogether if it persist in a course which brings discredit upon the churches as a whole.

How Did Associations Originate? From the beginning of Congregationalism in New England the need was felt for some body representative of the churches and more permanent than councils, but fear was felt lest such bodies should become subversive of the liberties of the churches.

Upham, in his "Ratio Disciplinæ," traces the plans for the establishing of permanent Associations and Conferences of churches back to the Synod of 1662, and even to John Cotton, who, near the time of his death, drew up a plan for such conferences, which may be found in Increase Mather's First Principles ("Ratio Discip.," 240-249). In yet another place, Increase Mather admitted the inadequacy of councils that had no permanent existence.

> That there should be such a consociation, agreeing among themselves that no new churches shall be owned by them, or pastor ordained or deposed without them, . . . is not only lawful, but absolutely necessary for the establishment of these churches.—Disq. Eccl. Councils.

This necessity which was felt in the very earliest period of New England's ecclesiastical life, grew imperative when Congregationalism crossed the Hudson.

> **Conferences or Synods.** Synods orderly assembled, and rightly proceeding according to the pattern, Acts 15, we acknowledge as the ordinance of Christ: and though not absolutely necessary to the being, yet many times, through the iniquity of men, and perverseness of times, necessary to the well-being of churches, for the establishment of truth and peace therein.—Cambridge Platform, xvi, 1.

> **The Association.** The association of churches at once approved itself and spread rapidly. It now covers all our churches. And so true is it to Congregationalism, that its function has been steadily enlarged, till it has come to be our pivotal fellowship body.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, p. 85.

> The central wheel of our system, as it is today, is undoubtedly the District Association. It is a combination of the churches within a reasonable area, for the purpose of stimulating fellowship and united action. Already we have made it the only ecclesiastical

body in our system by vesting in it the responsibility for ministerial standing.—*De Forest:* Congregational Fellowship and Oversight, p. 33.

Congregational churches are grouped into local or District Associations, bodies which formerly existed solely for fellowship. Originally they were purely voluntary, but it is no longer accurate to describe them by this term. A Congregational church has full liberty to withhold itself from fellowship in an Association and to withdraw from the Association at its pleasure, but a church so outstanding or withdrawn, while Congregational in government, is not reported in the records of the denomination as a Congregational church. It therefore is no longer strictly accurate to speak of the Association as a voluntary body.

Less Usurpation Now than in Early Days. There is no danger to liberty in escaping from the perils of consociationism. In 1708 twelve ministers and four laymen met by order of the Assembly or Legislature of Connecticut at Saybrook, to devise a remedy for the evils of lax discipline consequent upon the growing separation of Church and State. They framed and issued the Saybrook Platform, which the said legislature, without any further approval of the churches, made the established ecclesiastical order of Connecticut (Bacon's Hist. Address, in Contrib. to Eccl. Hist. Ct. 38, 39). This Platform consociated the churches of a county, or of a definite part of a county, into an ecclesiastical body called a consociation. Cases of discipline could be carried to a council composed of the churches consociated together, which should give "a final issue, and all parties therein concerned shall sit down and be determined thereby"; or, if the case were too large or difficult for one consociation to handle, another might join with it in determining the final issue (Saybrook Plat., Art. V, 7). This Platform has had a double interpretation, one of which regards it as purely Congregational in principle and results; but the other regards it as subversive of the independence of the local churches and as introducing into consociations the fundamental principle of Presbyterianism (Contrib. Eccl. Hist., 40 et seq.). The latter was the view of the Hartford North Association of Ministers (Gillett's Hist. Presby. Ch., i, 438, 439, note). This Platform, by going too far in remedying "the defects of discipline in the churches" occasioned by the partial but growing separation of Church and State, hindered the introduction of a better method, until the system of consociated churches had been largely neglected in Connecticut, and prevented its spread into other colonies and states. Yet the Saybrook Platform saved every church in Connecticut from the Unitarian apostasy, which carried over so many of the unassociated churches of Massachusetts. This plan of consociation now embraces only four bodies, and these are in Connecticut.—*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, pp. 366-367.

Organization from Below. Our organific direction is from below upward. We do not begin with overlords, whether called bishops or superintendents or ministers. We begin with common men, free individuals, uncoerced, associating themselves in voluntary local churches, each church as free in its own domain as the souls that compose it.—*Nash:* Congregational Administration, p. 15.

Local Autonomy Not Endangered. If it be recognized that the government of each particular church is in its membership, we may adopt diocesan and connexional methods of administration, not only without mischief, but even with the best results.—*Mackennal:* Address to Congregational Union of England and Wales.

Have We District Associations or Local Associations? The term, District Association, has not been in common use among us. In our confusion of terminology, we were accustomed to speak of the local Association in contradistinction from the state Association. But having now State Conferences we do not need the word local to distinguish between the two. Moreover, the word local is inaccurate, and is applied to the individual church. In the present work the term local is restricted; and reference is made to the local church; the District Association; and the State Conference.

Is the Association a Menace to Local Autonomy? Congregational churches, while self-governing and subject to no ecclesiastical authority in their local affairs, are more than independent units. They meet unitedly in district, state and national bodies. The development of these bodies, their approach to uniformity of organization, and the increase in the measure of responsibility delegated to them by the churches, constitute one of the most significant facts in recent Congregational history.

Is the Association a Voluntary Body? In the beginning an Association was a purely voluntary body, but at the present this cannot be affirmed of it. The Association has an organic relation to our denominational life.

What Is a Ministerial Association? In certain of the New England states ministerial Associations existed separate from those related to the Association of the churches. Inevitable confusion in the use of the terms has arisen from this fact. Much of the older Congregational literature deny-

ing the power of Associations grew out of the definitions of Associations which limited them to voluntary ministerial bodies. Dr. Dexter and other Congregational authorities of his day were emphatic in their declarations that Associations were purely voluntary and had no authority whatever. This was true and is true of the Association as these authorities conceived it, which was that of a mere voluntary ministerial club.

But in Congregational practice even these ministerial Associations were something more and other than voluntary clubs. They covered more or less exactly the territory of corresponding groups of churches, and the pastors of those churches and the ministers without churches residing within the bounds of the Association were expected to belong to these ministerial bodies. Their certificates passed for credentials of good standing. Commonly they assumed the right to issue licenses to preach the gospel. The older theory covering these ministerial Associations as mere voluntary and unrelated organizations never was consistent. They never had a logical place in the Congregational system as such unrelated bodies.

Where Associations of ministers existed and the Associations of churches have reorganized in recent years, some interesting problems have arisen as to the relations of the two bodies. It is not necessary that the Association of ministers disband. It can so modify its own by-laws as to become an integral part of the Association of churches and ministers, and it can hold its separate meetings for fellowship. The Association of churches can make the Association of ministers its committee on licensure and on ministerial standing, but this committee should report to the Association of churches and ministers. Cummings gives the following account of the use of ministerial Associations:

> After the year 1675, and perhaps earlier (Pres. Stiles says about 1670), after great desolations by the Indian wars, the neighboring ministers in several counties in New England met together to pray; and subsequently they began to discuss subjects of common

interest at their meetings. At length, some "presbyterially inclined" ministers began to dignify their meetings with the name of "Classes." Thus matters progressed until, in 1705, an effort was made by one of these Associations to combine all the ministers in the country into similar bodies, for the purpose of establishing a Consociation with powers similar to those afterwards claimed by the Consociations of Connecticut. They issued their proposals, bearing date November 5, 1705. These proposals were successfully resisted by "divers godly ministers" at the time, though they afterwards prevailed, by the interference of state authority, in Connecticut. In Massachusetts, however, Associations from this time became general, but have neither held nor claimed any ecclesiastical authority, such as was designed in the "Proposals," with the single exception of examining and licensing candidates. Two attempts have since been made to give ecclesiastical authority to ministerial associations; but they have been signal failures.—Cong. Dict., Associations.

Are Ministerial Associations Desirable? It is desirable that ministers form organizations of their own for fellowship and conference; but it would tend to prevent confusion if these voluntary bodies would avoid the name of Association.

Should Ministerial Standing Repose in Associations of Ministers? In some of the older states ministerial standing lies in Associations of ministers apart from Associations of churches. This, however, cannot be called good Congregationalism. Where it obtains the Association of ministers should become an organic part of the Association of churches and may then receive or administer such authority as churches delegate to it in the matter of ministerial standing.

What Is a Consociation? The term consociation, formerly used to describe an ecclesiastical body which was practically a standing council, has disappeared from our denominational nomenclature except in Connecticut, whose Consociations differ little from Associations.

The Boston Synod of 1662 declared that every church has "full power and authority ecclesiastical within itself, regularly to administer all the ordinances of Christ, and is not under any other ecclesiastical jurisdiction whatever: . . . hence it follows, that Consociations are not to hinder the exercise of this power, but by counsel from the word of

God to direct and strengthen the same upon all just occasions." They go on to define the objects of Consociations, and to recommend them to the churches. Samuel Mather shows that a Consociation of churches was acknowledged by the early New England Congregationalists, in the sense of asking light, but without authority to govern.

Consociations. Trumbull informs us, that in 1659 the General Court of Connecticut ordered a council, the decision whereof should be final. The General Court of Massachusetts endeavored to establish the same thing, and so called the synod of 1662. These synods embraced not only all the ministers of the colony whose legislature called them, but also certain specified individuals of the other colonies, to ensure majorities. But they failed of such a majority in Connecticut, through this over-management. The Boston Synod was more successful, and recommended a consociation, having first, however, premised that it should be shorn of its locks, by being stripped of judicial power.

About the beginning of the eighteenth century, Cotton Mather having converted his father in his dotage, led in a strenuous effort to establish a virtual consociation. Proposals were introduced into the Boston Association, and through them to the Massachusetts Convention; but they were successfully opposed by John Wise of Ipswich and others. The proposals, which may be seen in Wise's "Quarrel of the Churches Espoused," were rejected in Massachusetts, but were soon received in Connecticut, and from that time have formed the basis of their Consociations.—*Cummings:* Cong. Dict., Consociations; *Trumbull:* Hist. Conn., ch. xiii.

Have Associations Definite Territorial Boundaries? It is desirable in general that an Association should embrace a compact body or territory and include all the churches within that territory and none beyond. It is not generally advisable that a church should separate itself from its own group of churches and go past other churches of the vicinage for fellowship with an association more remote. Yet no hard and fast rule can be laid down governing territorial limits. The English-speaking churches of a given state may constitute the membership of five or ten or any other number of Associations, and divide the territory by counties, or according to railroad systems or other means of transportation, as is found convenient. There may also exist an Association of the German or Scandinavian churches of the whole state, or of a part of the state, territorially overlapping all or part of the other Associations.

A problem of peculiar difficulty sometimes presents itself in those states where there is a considerable number of colored churches and in which there are two organizations, one of the white and the other of the colored churches. A double organization of this character may not be ideal, and yet because of the practical difficulties involved in a single organization it may be not only permissible but advisable. At any rate, there is no superior ecclesiastical authority that can compel two groups of churches to unite in one Association. An unhappy condition of affairs prevailed in the vicinity of the city of New York in the years following the Beecher trial, in which the churches in a given territory were divided into two overlapping Associations. This was unfortunate, but in time it adjusted itself, as such difficulties are fairly certain to do without outside pressure.

The rule, therefore, is that while it is generally desirable that a Congregational Association include all the churches in a given district, and only the churches within that district, conditions may arise and have arisen that have caused territorial overlapping, and an Association otherwise regular cannot be deemed irregular for this reason alone.

But this principle must not be interpreted in such manner as to permit discourtesy on the part of one Association to another. If an Association of churches in Iowa were to withdraw fellowship from a church situated within that state, it would not be permissible for the Association of Rhode Island to admit the excluded Iowa church to its membership. If the Association of Rhode Island believed that the Association of Iowa had done wrong it could present its reasons for so believing to the offending Association, or ask for a mutual council, but it would not be justified in the attempt to correct a wrong by an arbitrary gerrymander.

Association Not for State and National Work. As concerns service in the Kingdom of God, the Association's field remains small; our extensive ministries must go through state and national organizations. But as concerns orderly and responsible organiza-

tion, the Association is the most important of our fellowship bodies.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, p. 85.

How May a Church Unite with an Association? A church organized within the bounds of an Association may acquire membership in said Association:

(1) By voting at a regular meeting of the church, called in accordance with the provision of its own constitution, to apply for membership in said Association, and electing delegates, including its pastor, to attend its forthcoming meeting.

(2) By submitting its constitution, covenant, and records for the examination of said Association, either directly or through its advisory committee.

(3) By vote of the Association receiving it into fellowship.

(4) By thereafter continuing its relations with the Association in the payment of its dues and by representation in its gatherings.

Local Church the Unit. The local church, thus principled, becomes the vital unit for all the larger forms in the polity. Out of it, not from individual Christians, arise those larger forms.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, p. 17.

How May a Church Withdraw from an Association? Membership in a Congregational Association being voluntary, yet according to the rules laid down in its constitution, a church may withdraw from the fellowship of one Association and unite with another:

(a) By formal vote of the church at a properly called meeting.

(b) By formal request in writing, asking the Association to dismiss the church that makes the request.

(c) By vote of the Association dismissing the church.

How May a Church Be Received from Another Ecclesiastical Body? A church dismissed by one Association or by a similar body of another denomination, or an independent church belonging to no Association, may be received into a Congregational Association on its own appli-

cation by vote of the church, the election of delegates, and the approval of its constitution, covenant, and rules.

How May a Church Withdraw from the Congregational Denomination? A Congregational church desiring to become independent or to unite with another denomination may do so:

(a) By its own vote at a regularly called meeting. Such a vote, however, being in effect an amendment of the constitution, must be carried by at least two-thirds of the membership of the church or by such larger vote as the constitution requires.

(b) By application for dismission from the Congregational Association of which it is a member.

(c) By favorable action upon said dismission.

A church withdrawing from the Congregational denomination may not properly unite with another ecclesiastical body until it is regularly dismissed; nor should any church be received into the Congregational fellowship until it has fully severed all relations with other ecclesiastical bodies.

May a Church Be a Member of Two Associations? It is ecclesiastically impossible for a church to be a member of two Associations at one and the same time. If a church applies for admission to an Association while still being a member of another ecclesiastical body and is accepted under the impression that its previous membership had been terminated, its membership in the second body should be held to be incomplete until it has adjusted its former ecclesiastical relations. In case of a church coming from another denomination which refuses to dismiss it for the purpose of joining a Congregational Association, the question must be decided according to the polity of the former organization. In any disputed case the Congregational membership must be regarded as complete only upon the orderly termination of the previous membership.

Has an Association a Right to Demand Creed Tests of Its Members? When an Association was regarded as a voluntary club, it could claim the right of setting up any

conditions which it chose for membership in its body. The situation has been materially altered in the present interpretation of the office of an Association. It has an undoubted right to assure itself of the doctrinal soundness of its members, but it cannot exercise this right in an arbitrary spirit or in mere caprice. Membership in an Association has now become an absolute essential in ministerial standing. It is no longer a voluntary matter. In the strict sense, therefore, an Association should have no creed tests of its own, but only such doctrinal requirements as assure it of the essential soundness of its members.

An Association, therefore, should be both more and less rigid than formerly in this particular. It should be less rigid because it has no right to submit any arbitrary tests of its own. It is under obligation to provide ministerial standing for every accredited Congregational minister called to labor within its bounds. It cannot refuse to do this arbitrarily or vindictively without danger of very grave injustice. On the other hand, as representing the churches, it should guard with exceeding great care the purity of those churches and of their ministry. Its right and duty are commensurate with its responsibility as the repository of ministerial standing.

No Creed Tests. They may have a platform by way of profession of their faith, but not a binding rule of faith and practice. . . . If so, then they ensnare men attending more to the form of doctrine delivered from the authority of the church . . . than to the examining thereof according to the Scriptures.—*Richard Mather:* Ch. Govt., p. 64.

It is the greatest possible tyranny over men's souls to make other men's judgments the rule of my conscience.—*Burton:* Rejoinder to Prynne, p. 19.

It is the design of these churches to make the terms of communion run parallel as may be with the terms of salvation. A charitable consideration of nothing but true piety, in admitting to evangelical privileges, is a glory which the churches of New England would lay claim to.—*Cotton Mather:* Ratio Disciplinæ, p. 90.

May an Association Withdraw Fellowship from a Church? An Association, for good cause shown, may withdraw fellowship from a church within its bounds. This

should be done, however, only in the case of some scandalous refusal on the part of the church to right some wrong affecting the welfare of the churches as a whole. An Association has no authority to withdraw fellowship from a church by reason of some matter of its own internal management, but if a church were making itself responsible for some grave doctrinal error or were bringing reproach upon all the churches by reason of its responsibility for serious moral scandal, the Association, after faithfully laboring with it, might properly after due warning withdraw fellowship from the church.

The early churches exercised this function in the famous "third way of communion."

The "Third Way." A third way then of communion of churches, is by way of admonition; to wit, in case any public offense be found in a church, which they either discern not, or are slow in proceeding to use the means for the removing and healing of. Paul had no authority over Peter, yet when he saw Peter not walking with a right foot, he publicly rebuked him before the church. Though churches have no more authority one over another, than one apostle had over another, yet as one apostle might admonish another, so may one church admonish another, and yet without usurpation. In which case, if the church that lieth under offense, do not hearken to the church that doth admonish her, the church is to acquaint other neighbor churches with that offense which the offending church still lieth under, together with their neglect of their brotherly admonition given unto them; whereupon those other churches are to join in seconding the admonition formerly given; and if still the offending church continue in obstinacy and impenitency, they may forbear communion with them, and are to proceed to make use of the help of a synod, or council of neighbor churches walking orderly (if a greater cannot conveniently be had) for their conviction. If they hear not the synod, the synod having declared them to be obstinate, particular churches approving and accepting the judgment of the synod, are to declare the sentence of non-communion respectively concerning them; and thereupon, out of religious care to keep their own communion pure, they may justly withdraw themselves from participation with them at the Lord's table, and from such other acts of holy communion, as the communion of churches doth otherwise allow and require. Nevertheless, if any member of such a church as liveth under public offense, do not consent to the offense of the church, but do in due sort bear witness against it, they are still to be received to wonted communion; for it is not equal that the innocent should suffer with the offensive. Yea, furthermore, if such innocent members, after due waiting in the use of all good means for the healing of the offense of their church, shall at last, with the allowance of the council of neighbor churches, withdraw

from the fellowship of their own church, and offer themselves to the fellowship of another, we judge it lawful for the other church to receive them (being otherwise fit) as if they had been orderly dismissed to them from their own church.—Cambridge Platform, xv, 3.

In general it is better that so solemn an act as the withdrawal of fellowship from a church should be exercised by no single church but by the churches acting through a council, or preferably through the Association of which the erring church is a member. "The third way" may be regarded as obsolete.

What Is the Status of a Church from Which the Fellowship of an Association Has Been Withdrawn? A church from which fellowship has been withdrawn in an orderly manner by the Congregational Association, or by a mutual council representing such Association and the church, has the standing of an independent Congregational church. It may unite with another ecclesiastical body, or may by vote be restored to membership in the Association and thus in the Congregational body. Its standing as a Congregational church is impaired, but not destroyed by such withdrawal. It is an independent church, Congregational in government, but outside the Congregational fellowship.

What Is the Standing of Ministers in the Association? Every Congregational minister in good standing must be a member of some District Association, which should ordinarily be the Association in which he resides; or if he is a pastor, in an Association within whose bounds his church is located. A church and its minister should have membership in the same Association.

Ministers not pastors are members of District Associations and commonly have all the privileges belonging to pastors in the Association. An Association has the right, however, to limit the privilege of voting to pastors and accredited delegates from the churches. This measure has frequently been proposed in Associations having a considerable number of retired ministers. In general, however, these members have conducted themselves with such pro-

priety, and being men of experience, have brought to the body such wisdom, that their counsel has been gladly sought and their right to vote unchallenged. Inasmuch, however, as Associations are primarily Associations of the churches, it has sometimes been held that even a pastor, while entitled to the floor, might not be permitted to vote unless specifically authorized by his church. The right of an Association cannot be questioned to provide some restrictions of ballot, particularly for those members who have permanently retired from the pastorate and have entered into business relations. When men once active in the ministry have entered into any secular calling, who desire for any good reason to retain their ministerial standing, the churches may very properly restrict their membership so that it shall not include the right to vote on matters strictly relating to the conduct of the churches. The wisdom of this arrangement is likely to be felt more as the advice of the Associations to the churches comes to be more nearly authoritative. The churches will insist that any word from the Association which they are expected to heed be uttered by their own pastors and lay delegates.

Shall the Minister Vote? The question often is asked, Shall the single vote of the pastor in the Association balance the vote of the church through its lay delegate? And, what is more important, shall the vote of the minister who is without a church be equal to that of the pastor of the church, and equally binding upon the church?

This is a serious question, and one which Associations have been called upon to consider, particularly in cities where a large number of ministers without charge, secretaries, professors, editors and superannuated ministers, are gathered in considerable number. It has seriously been proposed to make these men honorary and not voting members of their Associations; and there is something to be said in defense of this proposition, especially in matters relating to the government of the churches, as for instance the ap-

portionment of denominational expenses among the churches.

The Vote of the Minister in Associations. Three practices now in vogue among us may be stated as follows: (a) In some Associations all ministers hold personal voting membership; (b) in other Associations there is no ministerial membership, but pastors are *ex-officio* delegates and voting members of the meetings; other ministers have no place in any meeting save as duly elected delegates of churches; (c) in still other Associations even pastors hold an *ex-officio* place in the meetings, but must be elected as delegates.

It is easy to object to any one of these arrangements, but the most just and consistent solution does not instantly appear. Ministerial membership, giving each minister, whether pastor or not, voting rights in every meeting, puts a minister on a par with a church, gives him undue prominence in the meetings and the organization generally, and introduces a double and disparate membership. On the other hand, to refuse ministerial membership is liable to injustice. For the minister, not the pastor only, is held under responsibilities peculiar to him, not shared by any layman, shared only by a church. We Congregationalists—and freemen generally—have a very vital rubric entitled "no taxation without representation." We feel like insisting in simple justice that one who is held to unique accountability must be given unique rights in the organization which holds him.

There are times when ordinary injustice at this point would be magnified into grievous wrong. The discipline of a minister as church member belongs in the church which holds his membership. But his discipline as minister belongs in the Association which holds his standing. It is a grave question whether he ought to be held amenable to disciplinary action by a body in which voting membership is denied him, and in which his fellow ministers, likewise excluded from membership, have no right to give judgment in his trial.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, pp. 105-106.

What Is the Place in an Association of the Minister Who Is Not a Pastor? In the old Congregationalism of New England a minister was a layman outside of his own parish, and as soon as he was dismissed from it his ordination terminated. Installation was another ordination and was performed with the laying on of hands. John Cotton did not baptize his son "Seaborn" on the voyage to America because he held that "a minister hath no power to give the seals but in his own congregation."

Ministerial Authority Ceases When Pastoral Relation Terminates. Church officers are officers to one church, even that particular church over which the Holy Ghost hath made them over-

seers. Insomuch as elders are commanded to feed, not all flocks, but that flock which is committed to their faith and trust, and dependeth upon them. . . . He that is clearly loosed from his office relation unto that church whereof he was minister, cannot be looked at as an officer, nor perform any act of office in any other church, unless he be again orderly called unto office; which, when it shall be, we know nothing to hinder, but imposition of hands also in his ordination ought to be used towards him again. For so Paul the Apostle received imposition of hands twice, at least, from Ananias.—Cambridge Platfrom, ch. ix, secs. 6, 7.

Dr. Dexter maintained that this was still the only logical theory of the Congregational ministry:

Strictly speaking, and as a matter of pure logical deduction from the principles of the case, it follows that when such a pastor ceases to hold his official relation to the church from which he received his elevation to the ministry, he descends into the ranks of the laity again, and is no more a minister, until some other church shall have elected and ordained (or installed—as all ordinations of a man after his first, are usually called) him as its pastor; when he resumes the official rank which he had demitted, rising again out of the ranks of the laity, to the function of the ministry. He has the same right to preach in this interim that he had after his licensure before his first ordination, namely: a temporary right of courtesy and general consent, until—finding that the Great Head does not call him to any pastorship—he shall subside into a mere layman; or until he shall be chosen and ordained by some other church as its pastor, and become a minister again. This, we say, is the necessary verdict of the principles of Congregationalism in regard to this matter; as it was the practice of the Fathers.—*Dexter:* Congregationalism, p. 150.

But this theory, logical as it appeared, was obsolete in Dr. Dexter's day, and had begun to be so as far back as the day of Cotton Mather, in which it was the opinion of the ministry and churches that a minister might administer the sacraments to a church without a pastor and that a minister did not leave his ordination behind him whenever he went from home.

In truth, we are more nearly logical in this matter than we ever were before. Ordination is for life, and not for a single pastorate. Installation is a wholly different thing from ordination, or, if it is not, then installation must go. Membership in an Association, which now has become necessary to good standing in the ministry, is no longer in any proper sense voluntary. The old theory is obsolete, and it never was logical.

In general it appears to be safe, and also just, that every minister should have a vote in the Association of which he is a member. The churches may save themselves from being overwhelmed by the clergy by increasing the proportion of lay members, so as to counterbalance the membership of ministers; but it must be confessed to the credit of the ministry, that the evils against which it is proposed to guard our churches from excess of the unchurched clergy are mostly theoretical. One thing is certain: the ministers will not consent to a recrudescence of the fallacious theory that ministerial standing depends solely upon the pastoral relation, nor would the church for a moment desire it. It is quite as much for the protection of the churches as it is for the welfare of the ministry that ministerial standing is lodged in associations of churches; and in the association where his standing is held a minister cannot well be denied the right to vote on questions that touch that standing. Indeed, he may go farther, and declare that in voluntarily withdrawing his standing from an association of ministers and lodging it in a body which represents the churches also, he reserves the right, in matters where his brother ministers are likely to be most competent to judge, to be tried by a jury of his peers.

In these matters Congregationalism still lacks something of complete consistency; but it is only fair to remember that the inconsistency is not wholly of our own making. We are making it less, instead of greater.

What Is the Status of Absent Ministers? Ministerial members of an Association transferring their residence to another Association should transfer their membership to the Association within which they reside, and the names of ministers who neglect to do so may be removed from the active list and placed upon an absent list, without prejudice to their ministerial standing, but without the privilege of active membership. Members who have been some time absent without transferring their membership or communi-

cating with the Association may have their names dropped from the rolls of the Association.

The foregoing provisions should not be held to apply to foreign missionaries who may retain their membership in their home Association, and should be administered in a spirit of tenderness and consideration, and also in the case of elderly and retired ministers not engaged in secular business who have good cause to desire to continue their membership in the Associations with which they have long been connected.

Chaplains in the army or navy, also, should be kept in orderly membership in an Association, even if for many years they are absent from its territorial bounds.

May an Association Incorporate? A District Association may incorporate under the laws of a state in which it is located as a corporation not for pecuniary profit. As the laws of the several states are not uniform, care will be necessary to see that all the provisions of the law are fully met, but the method is not ordinarily a difficult one. A good Christian lawyer should be consulted and his advice followed in arranging details. Some changes may be required in the Association's constitution to conform to the law and make the organization thoroughly legal. Without attempting in this brief space to give the details that are required by the laws of the several states, the following will indicate the steps that usually are necessary:

(1) The Association should vote to become incorporated according to the laws of the state within which it is located, and adopt all changes necessary in its constitution to conform to the laws of the state.

(2) A petition should be addressed to the Secretary of State, or Commissioner of Corporations, or such other officer as the state designates, setting forth the following information:

(a) The corporate name of the Association.

(b) The object of the Association as stated in its constitution.

(c) The purpose for which it desires incorporation, as the promotion of the general interests of the churches and the ministers composing it, and of the interests of the Congregational denomination as a whole and the various organizations thereof.

(d) The powers which it desires to assume, as the receiving, holding, transfer of property in trust, or otherwise, for the use and benefit of the churches, or of any church, or of any organization representative of the churches.

(e) The principal place of business of the corporation.

(f) The list of officers first chosen under the proposed corporation and the residence of each, and the statement that these are citizens of the United States and of the state within which the Association is located.

(g) The declaration that this organization is not for pecuniary profit of the incorporators, and that no trustee or director thereof receives pecuniary benefit by virtue of his relationship.

(h) The corporate seal of the proposed corporation.

(i) The certificate of a notary public with oath, if required by law.

(j) A copy of the constitution and by-laws of the proposed organization.

This application being filed, the Secretary of State or Commissioner of Corporations will issue a certificate of incorporation, or in some states merely certify that the papers have been duly recorded and are on file in the state office.

In some states it is necessary also that the articles of incorporation be recorded in the recorder's office of the county where the principal business office of the Association is located. While the laws of the several states vary in detail, the process is ordinarily quite a simple one, and while a lawyer of experience should attend to it, he will not find the task a difficult one.

May Associations License Candidates for the Ministry? Associations of churches may and should license candidates

for the ministry. The Associations of ministers in New England which continue this practice should do so as representing the Association of churches and ministers, and their action should become valid only when reported to and approved by the District Association of the churches and ministers.

May Associations Ordain? An Association of churches and ministers may ordain ministers of the gospel, and in many states they are performing this function.

A resolution approving ordination by Association was submitted to the Committee on Polity at the National Council in Des Moines in 1904. The resolution received the formal approval of the committee, but was not reported to the council because it was deemed likely to provoke wide difference of opinion. Three years later at Cleveland the Council unanimously adopted a report approving the resolution that church recognition be given to the place of the Association of churches as a conciliary body, and authorizing Associations to ordain ministers. A custom, therefore, which already was in operation in some states, has now become quite general and is of undoubted standing among us.

Local Church Does Not Ordain. We should also cease to claim for the local church the exclusive right to ordain. That belongs with the pastoral, not with the kingdom theory of the ministry. The right of every church to invite any man to officiate as its pastor is not to be denied, nor its right to call a council to ordain a candidate. The Congregational churches may, indeed, prefer to retain this method of getting at the ordination of new men. But let us discharge our minds of the fiction that the meaning of this method is that ordination is the prerogative of a single church, a sacred part of its wonderful autonomy, while the co-operation of other churches in ordination is social courtesy and a good display of church fraternity. It is time to hold and practice the larger idea that the Congregational church—Congregational churches, if the phrase is preferred—provides itself, or themselves, with a ministry. The ordination of a candidate is the act of the church at large, performed by the churches of a vicinage acting co-ordinately and representing not a single church but the denomination.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, pp. 66-67.

Ordination by Association. Ordination should be by that body, namely, the local Association of churches, to which we safely entrust the standing of ministers; and the Association should be

ready to meet for ordination at the call of its own officers, upon the request either of a local church or of the candidate himself. And even if ordination by a council of churches is still preferred, it should be as competent and orderly for an Association of churches as for a single church to call that council. The provision, be it repeated, of an unfailing line of men discharging the ministerial function in the Kingdom and the church is the duty and prerogative of the church, or of the churches corporately, not singly.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, p. 67.

The Best Ordaining Body. It is evident at a glance that ordination by an Association of churches is good Congregational ordination. No man ordained by such a body would have his ministerial standing questioned anywhere in the land. The Association is a better body than the council for this service, inasmuch as it includes all the churches of the vicinage and has permanent life and records. Having more time and repeated sessions for its business, with standing officers and committees, it is less likely than a council to perform a mistaken ordination, while it is always at hand to correct such an error.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, pp. 91-92.

May an Association Accept or Reject Members? Every deliberative body has a right to judge of the qualifications of its own members. A council convened within the bounds of an Association cannot require the Association to accept a minister whom it ordains. Associations have full authority to inquire concerning the composition and findings of councils within their bounds, and to refuse to receive as members any ministers who have been ordained by councils not fairly representative of the whole body of the Association. Associations may also refuse to receive by transfer from another Association any minister whom they believe to be unworthy or to have been hastily ordained.

Can an Association Depose a Minister? An Association, having the right to ordain ministers and being entrusted by the churches with the standing of the ministers within its bounds, has also the right to terminate the ministerial standing of one of its own members for cause, and may withhold or withdraw fellowship from a minister for immorality, or unfaithfulness to his vows of ordination, provided that every minister shall have the right to demand a fair trial, either before the Association or by a council to be chosen by the accused and the Association of which he

is a member. No minister from whom fellowship has been withdrawn by an Association or a similar organization or by any ecclesiastical body in fellowship, should be considered a Congregational minister by the Association, but should be regarded as deposed by the authority of the churches.

An Association may withdraw fellowship from a church that walks disorderly.

For many years the author of this work has asserted the right of an Association either to ordain or depose. Until recently he has supposed that he stood alone among authorities on Congregational usage in this assertion. This was in no way surprising, as both Dexter and Ross finished their work before the changes wrought in our polity were recognized by the National Councils of 1904 and 1907. This principle the author discussed with Dr. George M. Boynton when he was preparing "The Congregational Way," but Dr. Boynton followed closely after Dexter in this particular. The author knew that Dr. Ross held positions regarding the development of Congregationalism which logically involved all that this present work asserts with reference to this right of Associations, and that the National Council had committed itself to, and the custom of the denomination had indubitably accepted, the newer and more efficient order of things. But as this present work was undergoing revision the author was surprised to find the entire system of associational ordination and deposition wrought out by Dr. Ross in prophecy, as follows:

> May not councils give place to Associations of churches in ordaining and deposing ministers?
>
> (1) There is nothing in the nature of the case to prevent this change. The churches in any locality may, in the exercise of their inalienable right, extend fellowship to a man in ordination or withhold it from him in deposition through an Association that meets statedly, as well as through a council that meets occasionally. The same churches do it in either case, and a council has no greater warrant than an Association, if as good.
>
> (2) There are reasons why an Association can ordain and depose better than a council of churches. These reasons are: (a) The Association embraces the churches in any locality, while the coun-

cil may include only a part of them, or go entirely beyond their number. Thus the inalienable right of the churches in any locality to extend or withhold fellowship finds a far safer expression in Associations than in councils. Indeed, councils sometimes not only ignore this right, but contemn and defy it. (b) If an Association make a mistake in ordination or deposition, it can correct it, and both will be recorded in the same journal for preservation and inspection—the same body correcting its own mistake. But if a council, doing the same things, commit a blunder, it cannot after adjournment correct it. Another council must be called to do that. So it is one council against another council. Besides, the results of both councils, being nowhere recorded, unless by the churches calling them, are soon lost altogether, or no one knows where to find them. True, in some states efforts are made to preserve them, but probably in no state are the collections complete, while in many states no effort is made to preserve them. (c) The independence of the churches is not interfered with by either method. Each church can have whom it pleases as pastor. If the Association will not ordain whom the church wants, the church is in the same condition precisely as if the same churches in council had refused to ordain him. If the church, to ordain a man under such circumstances, go beyond the boundary of the Association for a council, or pick a council from within the Association, it defies the inalienable right of those churches in the locality, which cannot be held to be a gain for councils. Instead, it is better for the church to fall back upon its own inalienable right to elect and inaugurate its own officers by ordination, remembering that it may itself be cut off in consequence from the Association and all church fellowship for violation of its covenant with the churches in connection. (d) In case of ordination by the Association of churches, expulsion after trial by a similar body would be deposition from the ministry. It would be the withdrawal of recognition by the churches of the man's call and function as a minister, from which action appeal may be taken to a mutual council. (e) The expense in time and money of councils of ordination and deposition, when the churches have stated meetings in associations, becomes a reason why the association should do the work, if consistent with principle. This reason is apparent in the western states and territories. —*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, pp. 288-289.

If, however, this principle is recognized, as it is now and henceforth must be recognized, the power of deposition by Association is in nowise limited, as might appear to be implied under (d) above, to ministers who have been ordained by Associations. When once the principle is conceded that an Association can ordain, any minister, no matter how ordained, may be deposed by the Association of which he is a member.

Is Deposition by Act of Association Good Congregationalism? The rule here laid down that a Congregational

minister may be deposed from the ministry by act of the Association of which he is a member is the logical and inevitable corollary from the now recognized right of Associations to ordain. That it meets a distinct and crying need in Congregationalism may be attested by the experience of any minister who has gone through with the painful process of withdrawing fellowship under the old plan. That plan as described by Dexter was the following:

(1) In the possible case of gross heresy or evil life in its pastor, a Congregational church should proceed to discipline him for the same as if he were only a private member, until it has reached the stage of full conviction of guilt. (2) Then—in virtue of the involved fellowship of the churches—instead of proceeding to pass the final vote and pronounce sentence, it should call a council to advise in the sad case. (3) Should the pastor be so excessively unwise as to decline to unite with them for this purpose, they may call one *ex-parte*. (4) This council should go over the case, and if satisfied of guilt, and the pastor remain impenitent, or if, even though he be penitent, the aggravated circumstances of the case seem to require it, it should advise the church to depose the offender from his ministry, and perhaps excommunicate him from its fellowship. (5) It will then be orderly for the church to accept, and follow, this advice of council.

On the Congregational theory, as has before been said, every pastor ought to be first a member of his own church. I see no way of efficiently adjusting our system in this respect to that "acting pastor" and "stated supply" phase which has so largely come over our ministry, without taking the ground that whenever a minister assumes the position of *quasi* pastor of a church, he, in so doing and by virtue of that fact, so far joins that church as of his own consent to render himself amenable to its discipline as if he were a member and pastor in full. And I recommend that every church insert some clause to this effect among its standing rules.—*Dexter:* Handbook, pp. 114-115.

However logical the foregoing method may have seemed in theory, it seldom, if ever, worked well in practice. Churches simply would not go through this five-fold agony. Moreover, it never was logical to throw the whole burden of such a long drawn-out and harrowing process upon a single church already distracted and perhaps divided over the discovery of the unworthiness of its minister.

Dr. George M. Boynton set forth distinctly the processes of withdrawal of fellowship as they appeared to him.

As to the conditions of this standing and its certification or loss,

the matter may perhaps be made most clear by separating the elements in which good standing consists:

(1) As an individual, the minister is a member of a local church like other men, and is responsible to it for his consistent living. So far as this is concerned he may lose his standing as a church member by the action of the church of which he is a member. It is an ancient usage, and advisable in most cases, that, in dealing with a ministerial member, a church should call in the advice of the neighboring churches in a mutual council, to aid it in its conclusion. If the council should advise the removal of the minister from his membership in the church, it could also advise the churches no longer to regard him as a minister.

(2) As a member of a profession, he has been received into a ministerial Association, which may terminate his membership by vote. The vote should state the reason for the action, on which the effect of the action would depend. If simply for long continued absence, it would cast no reflection on his moral character, though it might on his conception of the requirements of good fellowship. The effect of the action of a ministerial Association would, however, only affect his professional standing, though it might be conclusive of his ministry, if no further appeal were taken by him.

(3) His standing as a minister of the Congregational denomination would be directly affected by the action of an ecclesiastical body, as the local conference or state Association of which he is a member. This, especially if communicated to other such bodies in the land, would directly discredit him; and unless he should appeal to an ecclesiastical council, it would terminate his ministerial career and remove him from the ministry of the denomination.

(4) The ultimate appeal in all cases is to an ecclesiastical council, which alone can finally take away from a Congregational minister the standing which was conferred on him by a similar body.

It may be seen that at any stage of this proceeding, the action of a church, ministerial Association, ecclesiastical conference or council, will be final, if concurred in, or not resisted, by the person affected thereby. It is seldom that the ultimate appeal is desired or necessary.

The expression "deposed from the ministry," though occasionally used, does not seem to be in accord with Congregational principles. On the belief that the Lord has called a man to the ministry, a Congregational council recognizes that call, and extends its fellowship to its ministry. All that it can properly do in the extremest case is to withdraw the recognition and fellowship which it has extended.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, pp. 89-90.

It will be noted in the foregoing that it is really expected that a guilty minister will not insist upon his right to call a council, but will be satisfied to drop the matter at some earlier stage. Dr. Boynton was in error in saying that the term "deposed from the ministry" is not in accord with Congregational principles. It was formerly used at the termina-

tion of every pastorate. That use rightly became obsolete, but still is an entirely proper term.

Both the foregoing authorities are logical if it be conceded that an Association has no authority to ordain. But Associations have authority to ordain, and therefore have a right to depose.

Dr. Dexter, in a figure borrowed from the application of isolation to cases of infectious disease, showed how completely a minister who has proved unworthy may be isolated by processes beginning and terminating in the local church:

Isolation in Infectious Disease. The very isolation and independence which belong to Congregationalism favor this freeness from error. The first thing to be done in a crowded community when a case of zymotic disease occurs, is to segregate the patient, and so cut off all possibility, and prevent all danger, of diffusing the infection. Congregational churches can "withdraw themselves" from erring sister churches, or anti-scriptural and unorthodox preachers, and so the spread of contagion will be checked, if not arrested. If a church-member fall into false doctrine or vicious behavior, the others deal with him and cast him out. If a pastor become unsound in doctrine or evil in life, his church casts him out, and in so doing warns other churches against him. Or, if his whole church should have been corrupted and side with him, its neighbor churches may easily cut the cord of fellowship by which it is holden to them and let the danger drift out of their neighborhood. Had the churches of Massachusetts at the beginning of the present century been bound together into any Presbyterian or other hierarchic unity, instead of sloughing off the Unitarian error, and coming forth from the trial exalted to a higher and nobler and more effective Orthodoxy, there can hardly be a doubt that the struggle would have been infinitely more severe, ending, most likely, in disastrous failure. In England Presbyterianism, with its much vaunted security against doctrinal decay, became Unitarian; while the "loosely organized" Congregational churches of that land remain to this day essentially sound in the ancient faith once delivered to the saints.—Handbook, p. 133.

This figure had some force in the day when Congregationalism was local, and a minister cut off from fellowship in his own church was effectually cut off from other churches, none of them far enough away to be in ignorance of what had taken place. But no such system is adequate in a system as large as Congregationalism has grown to be. An unworthy minister, cut off from membership in a church in Maine, can be in Arizona before the following

Sunday, and having scattered disease there for a year or two need not lose a single Sunday in transporting himself to Minnesota, where, having wrecked a church, he may move on to Florida. No action by local churches in any of these distant communities does or can prevent his carrying the germs of his false doctrine or immorality from state to state. The older method, so stoutly defended by the earlier authorities, has proved ineffective, and must be relegated, as virtually it has been relegated, to a place among the things that served in the day of short distances and provincial distribution of churches, but which have no proper place in continental Congregationalism.

Withdrawing Fellowship. Our present method of church Associations, with redress in mutual councils, gives unity without loss of liberty. These Associations include all our churches. If a church violate its covenant which it entered into on joining the Association, it may be expelled for the same, or fellowship may be withdrawn from it. But there is here, as in the case of ministerial standing in Associations, no exercise of authority over the church; for all the Association does is to clear itself in self-protection of an unworthy member. The church may manage all its own affairs, even to having whom it will as pastor; but it may not presume to manage the affairs of other churches and force itself upon their fellowship in Association; for that would be the exercise of authority by one church over other churches. To deny an Association of churches this common right of self-protection, under the cry of centralization, is the absurdity of license; is to make one wayward church supreme in power; it is to give the said church the right and power to compel others to fellowship it. Fellowship is reciprocal, between equals, and it is no centralization to exclude the unworthy from fellowship.—*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, p. 369.

Is the Increase of Power on the Part of the Association Justifiable? It is evident that this chapter contemplates a considerable increase of responsibility on the part of Associations over that of the Associations in former days. It is important that any change so widespread and involving so many apparent departures from ancient custom should be carefully safeguarded. If Associations should come to perform the solemn responsibility of ordination, and other

grave functions, as mere details of Association business, the result might easily become deplorable. It is of the utmost importance that where Associations take over enlarged functions there be assurance that the churches are ready for the change, and that the Associations themselves are prepared to assume the responsibilities and attend to them in an orderly and efficient manner.

These dangers being safeguarded, there can be little doubt of the desirability of the evolution now so manifest in our ecclesiastical life. Our churches have always believed in fellowship, but the organic forms through which that fellowship has been expressed have been exceedingly variable and may still be varied at the discretion of the churches as guided by the Spirit of God. The local church is still supreme within its own parish, but the churches are finding and will find more permanent and stable forms of fellowship than the vicinage council can provide for the needs of the churches in their organic unity.

The Vital Unit. Associations, conferences, councils, societies, National Council, all are organizations of local churches, not of individual Christians, not of independent and authoritative officials. The churches unite of their own will into all these social forms, giving to them their leadership, their standing warrant, their life itself.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, p. 17.

Even Dr. George M. Boynton recognized not merely the inevitable trend of Congregationalism toward the more stable form of fellowship, but the inherent advantages of a permanent over a temporary body in matters of ministerial standing. He said:

The conference then, if so authorized by the churches composing it, could properly act in the licensure of candidates and in place of a council in the ordination and installation of ministers, and could be the custodian of ministerial standing and do much which a council has been accustomed to do. The spread of Congregationalism over a continent makes the council, which has no permanent existence or records, more difficult, and possibly less successful than formerly, and also makes the local body, which has continuance, of more importance in the denominational doings.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, pp. 122-123.

Liberties of Churches Secure. If we bear in mind, that legislation and judicature have no place in the church, in general bodies

or anywhere else, the liberties of the churches are entirely safe.—*Heermance:* Democracy in the Church, pp. 102-103.

Standing of Churches and Ministers. No Congregational church is independent. It can become so by withdrawing from its affiliations with the other churches, but in that case it ceases to be a part of the Congregational body.—*Dr. Quint:* In Dunning's Congregationalists in America, p. 492.

What Are the Rules of Business of the District Association? Each District Association makes its own rules of business, but is governed in general by the precedents and established uses of the Congregational denomination.

Specific directions for the government of District Associations are given in the author's Congregational Manual, pp. 160-164, and in its Rules of Order, pp. 14-28.

What May an Advisory Committee Do? An important feature of the new form of organization of Associations is the standing committee, known either as the executive or advisory committee. An outline of the duties of this committee, which of course may be varied according to the will of the Association, is herewith given as the same is practiced in the Chicago Association.

The advisory committee is a large and representative body, whose members are elected for a period of three years, the term of one-third expiring each year. It is an incorporated body having the power of a board of trustees under the laws of the State of Illinois and can hold property for the Association, or in trust for any church or other object which the Association may designate. It is the committee on credentials and the committee on discipline and also the committee on licensure. It meets monthly for the examination of candidates for licensure, to receive applications for membership in the Association, and for such business as may come before it. It has no authority to grant certificates of licensure, serving only as a committee of examination and conference, having general oversight of licentiates. It does not grant admission to or dismission from the Association, but when a member applies to the Association not having received his credentials and has

been approved subject to the receipt of proper papers, the advisory committee is authorized to approve the credentials when they come, thus completing a pending membership, and sometimes preventing the name of a minister in good standing from being omitted for a year from the national Year Book. The advisory committee, or a major portion thereof, is expected to be invited to councils of ordination held within the bounds of the Association, unless such council includes the whole membership of the Association.

In addition to the foregoing, the advisory committee is authorized to represent the Association on invitation of any church or minister in need of advice. It has been called into council to consider the wisdom of organizing, dividing, combining, and disbanding churches; in matters of dispute between pastor and church; in matters relating to the standing and character of ministers. It has been able to handle many difficult matters with some degree of tact and wisdom, its functions being in general to do those things which the Association needs to have done between its own regular meetings and which are not delegated by the Association to some special body. Its functions fall into two classes: First, those which belong to it as the executive body of an Illinois corporation, and secondly, those which are delegated to it by special vote of the Association. Not every Association has need of legal incorporation, but almost every Association has need of some such body to represent the Association between its own stated meetings and always subject to the Association.

XVIII. THE STATE CONFERENCE

What Is a State Conference? A State Conference is a body composed of the churches and ministers of a large district, commonly one of the states or territories in the Union.

This definition does not overlook the possibility of the union of two or more states, as Kentucky and Tennessee, in one Conference, or the division of one larger state, as California, into two or more State Conferences, each possessing in the territory which it covers all the characteristics and prerogatives of a State Conference.

Is the Conference Composed of Delegates from Associations? The State Conference is not composed of delegates from the District Associations. It is made up (1) of the ministers in good standing belonging to the Associations within its bounds, and (2) of the churches represented directly by their own delegates. Territorially it equals, or should equal, the sum of the Associations within it, but the composition of its membership is formed directly by the churches and the ministers.

Dr. Dexter assumed that "the several District Conferences" or Associations, would be "united together in, and send delegates to, State Conferences, which meet once a year" (Handbook, p. 125). But as uniformly constituted, our State Conferences are made up, not of delegates from the district bodies, but of delegates from all the churches of the state, and ministers from the same state or territorial division.

How Many Delegates May a Church Elect to a Conference? The State Conference determines by its own vote the number of delegates which each church may elect. Ordinarily each church is represented by its pastor and one lay delegate, but a minister, having membership in the body by right of his ministerial standing, need not always be regarded as representing his church. In some states it has

been held that only the lay delegate should be regarded as representing the church. This, however, is the exception, and does not deserve to become the rule. A pastor, even though he has standing in the body as a minister, should be enrolled as representing his church. The church deserves the dignity of representation both clerical and lay, and the pastor, even though he have interests in the body apart from those that are distinctly pastoral, should be there primarily as a representative of his church. The Conference may increase the number of its lay delegates, admitting two or more from each church.

Does Ministerial Standing Repose in the State Conference? Ministerial standing is deposited in the District Association, and not in the State Conference. The exceptions to this rule have been few, and practically have been confined to states with so few Congregational churches that the District Association and the State Conference are one body. In such cases there is no valid objection to the State Conference holding ministerial standing, but the general rule is wise and well-established that the body of churches and ministers nearest to the local church should retain ministerial standing. But no minister can be a member of a State Conference except he have ministerial standing in a District Association, in states where the two bodies exist.

Higher Memberships Rest on Good Standing. Conceivably it may still be asked why the state conference should, in constituting its membership, refer at all to the local associations. The answer is, Because our Congregational practise leaves in the associations the determination of the good standing which consists in membership acquired and retained. The state conference, the national societies, and the National Council then accept the matter of membership as settled and adjust their practise thereto. The question then becomes one as to representation in these higher bodies. And the two classes to be represented are: (1) churches and (2) ministers, the whole number of the latter as an ordained ministry, not merely the major fraction of them as pastors. Our organific direction, as considered in the first lecture, is from below upward. The single church is first. The churches organize the local association, and make it the corner-stone of our fellowship structure. The churches carry up to the state conference nothing which the smaller bodies can bear just as well. And the churches

carry on to the national bodies only the still wider interests common to the states.—*Nash:* Congregational Administration, pp. 108, 109.

May a Conference Invite Corresponding Members? A Conference may invite ministers or laymen of other bodies, who are present, to sit as corresponding members, having the right to the floor without vote. This courtesy is peculiarly appropriate where such visiting members are present in an official capacity.

May a Conference Entertain an Appeal from an Association? A State Conference may not entertain an appeal from a District Association. It is not the intention in Congregational usage to provide the fatally convenient machinery of a series of ascending courts. A State Conference might advise an Association, or mediate between two Associations, but precedents for such action, if they exist at all, are rare.

May Superior Bodies Receive Overtures? A District Association may present overtures or memorials to a State Conference, and a District Association or State Conference may present memorials to the National Council in any matter touching the welfare of the churches; and any such communication is entitled to receive and invariably does receive careful consideration.

May an Appeal Be Taken from a Conference to the National Council? No appeal can be taken from a State Conference to the National Council. A State Conference, however, may ask advice of the National Council, and the Council is competent to give its best judgment with as much force as there is force in the reason of it. The National Council would be justified, however, in declining to give advice on a matter of less than national interest.

By What Rules Are Conferences Governed? Conferences are governed first of all by their own rules of order as set forth in their constitution and by-laws, and secondly, by the general principles of Congregational usage.

Specific directions for the government of State Conferences

are given in the author's Congregational Manual, pp. 160-164, and in its Rules of Order, pp. 14-28.

May a State Conference Incorporate? State Conferences are quite generally identical in membership with the State Home Missionary Society, and may exercise through this or other forms of organization authority over the missionary societies maintained by the churches of the Association. The National Council in 1907 recommended that State Conferences become legally incorporated and empowered to hold property and conduct the operations of the churches in their missionary and philanthropic work:

> That the state organizations become legally incorporated bodies; and that under a general superintendent and such boards as they may create, and acting in co-operation with committees of local Associations and churches, they provide for and direct the extension of church work, the planting of churches, the mutual oversight and care of all self-sustaining as well as missionary churches, and other missionary and church activities to the end that closer union may insure greater efficiency without curtailing local independence.

In harmony with the foregoing recommendation, State Conferences are remodeling their constitutions and providing for more centralized power to be exercised by the churches in their representative capacity.

How May State Bodies Consolidate? Where a Home Missionary Society exists and it is desired that its work be taken over and performed by the State Conference, the following steps are necessary:

(1) The State Conference should change its constitution so as to provide for incorporation, and incorporation should be obtained in the manner directed for the incorporation of District Associations.

(2) The State Home Missionary Society should change its constitution so as to provide for the taking over of its work by the State Conference.

(3) The two constitutions should be so adjusted that the Board of Directors shall be the same in number in both bodies, and it should be planned that the same persons be elected separately in each body.

(4) The State Home Missionary Society should not be permitted to pass out of existence. It is entirely possible that its name is contained in legacies that might be lost if the corporate existence of the Home Missionary Society were discontinued.

(5) When the State Conference is fully incorporated and the two constitutions have been amended, a meeting of the two bodies should be called for the same time and place. The State Home Missionary Society should then by formal vote transfer all its work and vested interests to the State Conference, and the State Conference should by formal vote accept the work and funds and obligations of the State Home Missionary Society.

(6) Each year thereafter the State Conference should elect by ballot the trustees or directors, and a separate ballot should elect the same persons to serve as directors or trustees for the same period of the Home Missionary Society.

(7) It is not necessary that the moderator of the conference be also president of the Home Missionary Society, or that the scribes of the two bodies be the same. In some respects it is better that these two sets of officers be different, in order that there may be a plain legal distinction between the two bodies. The annual business, however, can be very briefly done. Where all the interests are in harmony, five to ten minutes will suffice for the separate meeting of the Home Missionary Society as such, but such a meeting should be held, and the record of it should be unmistakable, and each year a resolution should be recorded on the books of the State Home Missionary Society that the work of the society continue in the care of the State Conference, and that all gifts, bequests or donations to the State Home Missionary Society be collected by, and used for the benefit of, the work of the State Conference.

It is hoped that these directions will not seem complicated or unnecessary. As a matter of fact, they are very simple, but the form of the several motions should be care-

fully drawn, and when so drawn and adopted, may be renewed year by year without change.

Although it is strongly advised that the annual meeting be held as herein provided, the fundamental resolution and constitutional changes should be permanent in character, and such that no bequest or donation would be likely to be lost through the accidental omission of a formal meeting.

Should Both Organizations Be Kept in Existence? The State Home Missionary Society need never go legally out of existence. It should not discontinue its annual meetings until it is confident it has collected the last legacy that would be likely to have been devised to it. When the time comes, as it may come in the course of twenty or fifty years, when it is deemed unnecessary to continue the form of an annual meeting, a carefully drawn resolution should be recorded providing that thereafter the annual meeting of this society be the annual meeting of the State Conference, and that the officers of the State Conference be also the officers of the Home Missionary Society, and that all members of the State Conference are members of the Home Missionary Society and that the State Conference have full right and authority in its own name to do all things that the State Home Missionary Society is authorized to do.

If in any state the advice here given is deemed unnecessarily technical and formal, it should be disregarded, if at all, only on the advice of competent legal counsel.

How May Both Bodies Continue and Work Together? In states where it is desirable to keep in full existence both the Home Missionary Society and the State Conference, yet to bring their work into close relations, the two bodies may be made identical in membership though not necessarily identical in their officers or governing boards.

They may hold their annual meetings at the same time and place, room being provided in the program of the State Conference for the annual meeting and public presentation of the Home Missionary Society.

XIX. THE ASSOCIATION ACTING AS COUNCIL

May an Association Act as a Council? An important development in the life of the Congregational churches in recent years is that whereby Associations have come to perform much of the work formerly done by councils.

This does not mean that the council is wholly superseded. It still exists as a time-honored and in some cases an efficient instrument for the expression of Congregational fellowship; but the churches have larger common interests to guard than formerly, and have come quite generally to feel that some more permanent and more certainly representative body than a council must be available both as an organ for fellowship and for the doing of denominational work. To this end our Associations are quite generally changing their constitutions so as to provide for the performance of such conciliary functions as the churches may require of them. This change, while not free from danger of abuse, has been approved by the National Council, and in general appears to be working to the satisfaction of the churches.

How May a Church Invite an Association to Act in a Conciliary Capacity? A church desiring the Association to which it belongs to act in ordination, dismission, or other business sometimes performed by councils, may issue a call in the form of a regular letter missive addressed to each of the churches in the Association. The body convening, however, in response to such a call, will be strictly a council and subject to all the rules governing a council.

Another course is permissible. The representatives of the church may confer with the advisory committee of the Association concerning the business to be presented, and determine whether it is better that it be done at a regular or special meeting of the Association, and the business for which the Association is to act in a conciliary capacity may thus be arranged for as a part of the regular program or through a call for a special meeting of the Association.

When the Association acts in a conciliary capacity at a special session, the time of meeting should be arranged in conference with the advisory committee, and the registrar should send out due notice of the proposed meeting. Churches should elect delegates as for a regular meeting. If the Association elects its moderator to serve until his successor is appointed, the special meeting will be called to order by the moderator; if otherwise, the moderator will be elected according to the rules. The quorum will be the regular quorum of the Association. A majority of the churches invited is not necessary if the constitution of the Association permits a smaller quorum. The Association, being organized, proceeds to do its business in essentially the same manner as a council, and the ordinary rules both for Associations and councils apply.

For these rules reference may be made to the writer's Congregational Manual.

When an Association is called upon to act in a conciliary capacity at its regular meeting, great care should be taken to prevent the ordinary business of the Association from so crowding the special business as to reduce it to a mere perfunctory formality. If the business be the examination of a candidate for ordination, sufficient time should be reserved for the examination, and the public exercise of ordination should be performed with solemn dignity. If the system of ordination by Association falls into contempt, the reason is likely to be through failure at this point.

If a candidate presents himself for ordination and through any confusion in arrangements no adequate provision can be made for his examination, the examination should either be delegated to a large and representative committee, meeting in a separate room, or to an appropriate standing committee of the Association, and a public report made upon it. Or the Association should adjourn to a special session for this particular purpose, permitting its program of addresses to proceed for the edification of the company assembled, while the Association gives itself

to the solemn responsibility of examining the candidates. If the impression should become general that examinations when performed by the Association are likely to be so shortened by the program or the pressure of business as to make such examinations less thorough than when performed by councils, the result would be most unhappy. Or, if public programs were so arranged that the public service of ordination were slighted or were made a mere side issue, the custom of ordination by Associations were more honored in the breach than in the observance. The new method is theoretically justifiable, and possesses some marked advantages, but it must be shown to be advantageous in practice. It is manifestly desirable that ordination be undertaken at the request of the church of which the candidate is a member or the pastor elect.

Does a Minister Ordained by an Association Become a Member of the Ordaining Body? Unless the Association provides in its rules that a minister ordained within its bounds either by council or Association becomes a member, a separate vote is required. But an Association may by rule provide that while it will review the proceedings of all councils of ordination, it will receive *ipso facto* as members all ministers ordained within its bounds by the Association itself, without further examination or formality.

May an Association Dismiss an Installed Pastor? If an Association is called to act in a conciliary capacity in the dismission of a pastor, the procedure is essentially the same as in a dismissing council; or if the service be performed at a regularly called meeting of the Association, the proceedings may include not only the formal termination of his pastorate, but also the severing of his relation with the Association and the granting him of a credential in due form.

For the rules relating to the conduct of Associations acting as councils reference is made to the author's Congregational Manual.

Do these New Functions Make the Congregational

Association a Consociation? The churches of Connecticut developed a system of Consociations in which the Consociation was essentially a standing council. The newer system of more compactly organized Associations possesses some features in common with the old-time Consociation, but the two are not entirely identical. The newer form of Association ought to be so administered as to possess the advantages of the Consociation without its disadvantages. Whether this result is attained will depend less upon the greater excellence of the machinery than the conscientious care by which it is operated.

XX. ECCLESIASTICAL DISCIPLINE

Has a Church a Right to Discipline One of Its Own Members? Every church has a right to discipline its own members for violation of any of its rules or obligations. This discipline may take the form of private or public admonition, censure, suspense, or excommunication.

Discipline. In dealing with an offender, great care is to be taken that we be neither over strict or rigorous, nor too indulgent or remiss: our proceeding herein ought to be with a spirit of meekness, considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted; and that the best of us have need of much forgiveness from the Lord.—Cambridge Platform, xiv, 4.

Has a Church a Right to Discipline a Non-Member? A local church has authority only over its own members, but a church may bear its testimony against any form of evil or any person who is doing evil. A local church may pass a vote of censure upon a public official of the community for failure to perform his duties. It may bear its testimony against any current form of error. It may withdraw fellowship from a sister church or from a minister. Any such act, however, bearing upon persons not of its own membership should be performed with prudence and discretion. The occasion should be such as manifestly to call for such action, and the vote or resolution should be free from all abusive or libelous matter.

Has a Church a Right to Discipline Its Minister? To this question historic Congregationalism gave a simple and unqualified answer, namely, that the minister is a member of the church and subject to its discipline like any other member. An answer somewhat less simple must now be given.

(1) A local church has a right to discipline its minister as a member of the church for any act for which it could discipline another member.

A local church has also a right to discipline its minister

for any undisputed act of unfaithfulness in the performance of his pastoral duty toward that particular church.

(2) But the right of a church to discipline its minister for failure in his duty as pastor belongs to the church only when the fact of such failure is undisputed. If the church charge the minister with unfaithfulness, and the minister denies his unfaithfulness, the church cannot be both prosecutor and judge. The question of the minister's fidelity in his contractual relations must be adjudicated before an impartial body.

(3) A church may discipline its minister for holding and teaching doctrines contrary to its own confession of faith. But no charge against a minister on this score will lie if it can be shown that the church knew when he became its pastor that he did not accept its confession of faith, and that it called him notwithstanding this knowledge.

(4) A church cannot discipline its minister for failure to accept any other creed than its own. If he holds and teaches the creed of the local church, but fails to hold and teach some other creed which the majority of the church believe to be orthodox, it cannot call him to account for his failure to conform to this extra interpretation of orthodoxy.

(5) A local church cannot discipline its minister in any matter touching his ministerial standing. This is a new but entirely valid principle. It follows logically from the resolution of the National Council in 1886, concerning ministerial standing, and the general acceptance by the churches since of the principle that ministerial standing resides in the District Association. Only within the special sphere of his relations to the local church of which he is a member and pastor can the local church bring a minister to trial before itself. If it believes him guilty of heresy as judged by the general standards of the denomination, or of conduct unbecoming a minister but not within the sphere of his particular relation to his own church, it must proceed against him through the Association of which he is a member.

The action of the National Council in 1915 on the Suspension and Deposition of Ministers completely answers many questions of this character.

How Should a Church Trial Be Conducted? If a member of a local church has violated his covenant he should be dealt with according to the nature and gravity of the offense. Where the offense is private, it should be dealt with privately, and made public only as a last resort. If he has sinned against another member of the church, the member whom he has wronged should go to him personally and in a spirit of Christian affection. If he will not repent, he should be visited again; this time with two or three brethren of the church, preferably some of its officers. These should labor with him affectionately and earnestly. If he remains obdurate the matter may be brought before the church.

If the fault be of a greater magnitude and of a public nature, any member may, and the officers of the church should, take reasonably prompt and effective action. He should first be visited and an effort made to secure his repentance, and if he will not repent he should be brought before the church on formal charges.

Any member of the church who is cited for trial should be furnished with a copy of the charges in writing, and also with the names of his accusers, and a date should be set for the hearing of his case. If he fails to appear or to send any answer, the church may proceed against him in his absence. If a formal trial is to be held, some member of the church should be appointed to represent him. Where the offense is of a public nature and the person accused fails to appear or answer, the church will be justified in a vote to suspend him for thirty days, or some other definite period, at the end of which time notice having been given him and he still failing to appear, fellowship may be withdrawn from him.

If the accused person appear and confess his fault, he should be forgiven, but he may be admonished or even sus-

pended, notwithstanding his confession, until he shall have proved the sincerity of his repentance. Churches, however, almost invariably deem it wise, as well as Christian, to offer free forgiveness to a member who confesses his fault, unless there is reason to fear that the confession has been made from unworthy motives, or that the act of forgiveness might appear to condone the wrong and possibly influence action in the civil courts or elsewhere.

Where a member confesses his fault, the church may still at its discretion hear the evidence, if it deem it wise to do so. In some cases the hearing of the evidence will make it apparent that the offender has made haste to confess only a portion of his wrong-doing. In others, it will appear that in his remorse he has censured himself beyond what is just. The right to hear such evidence, however, is rarely the custom, the fact of repentance, when in apparent good faith, being commonly a ground of forgiveness. The purpose of church discipline is not punishment but restoration.

Duty of the Church to Guilty Member. Should the accused person be found guilty of the fault laid to his charge, it becomes the duty of the church solemnly to admonish him of his sin, and the absolute necessity of atoning for it, by making proper reparation, with the spirit of the gospel.—*Dwight:* Sermon, clxii.

Is Professional Counsel Permitted in a Church Trial? Where a formal church trial becomes necessary, a member should be appointed to present the charges and one may be appointed to defend the accused. The church may, or may not, admit outside counsel. It has a right to insist that the accused choose his counsel from the membership of the church. If, however, he allege that no member of the church is competent or willing to defend him, he may be permitted to appear with other counsel. He must not, however, abuse this liberty by the introduction of court technicalities into the conduct of church cases.

Should a Church Trial Be Conducted as in a Court of Law? Church trials, when unhappily they must be held, should be conducted with simplicity, fairness, and quiet dig-

nity, with due regard for reasonable forms of law and evidence, but without attempt to imitate the technicalities of the civil courts.

Must the Whole Church Try an Offender? Church trials may be conducted by the entire church, or by a commission chosen by the church, or by a board of arbitration selected by the church and the accused. It is manifestly unwise that every church trial should be conducted before the whole congregation. The church membership includes young children, and it would be a gross impropriety even to set forth in their presence, much less to make them judges of, a case of flagrant immorality. In most cases of this character it is better that the trial be by a commission, or a board of arbitration, the final vote to be by the whole body of adult members of the church.

May a Member Be Granted a Letter While Under Charges? Ordinarily not. No member on trial is entitled to escape the just condemnation of his deeds by withdrawing from the church under charges. Yet there occur situations in which charges growing out of the violent disagreement of two members increase in bitterness to a point at which the church threatens to be rent in twain, and where the situation can be clarified by a mutual agreement that one of the members, being otherwise worthy of commendation, shall remove to another church, the charges against him being withdrawn in the process. Such a member, it will be noted, does not really withdraw while under charges.

May a Member Be Dropped While Under Charges? A member may not be dropped from the church roll while charges are pending against him, nor while he is presenting charges against another member.

Dropping Names from the Church Roll. Nor should a member be dropped while charges against him are pending. If a man be under charges, the case should go to trial, that the man may be acquitted or condemned. To drop his name, even at his own request, under charges, would be the perversion of discipline. If a man prefer charges against a church member or the pastor, the matter cannot be evaded by dropping the complainant, either with

or without censure, until such charges have been properly disposed of. It were abhorrent thus to punish a man for beginning process of discipline; and the dropping of his name under such circumstances would properly be held to be a confession of guilt or of fear of conviction on the part of those doing it or permitting it to be done. If charges are preferred against a man or officer through spite or persecution, the motive should be exposed in the trial and the false accuser of the brethren should be punished by proper church action. But absent members may sometimes be dropped from the roll. Such members should be hunted up and labored with, and so induced to take letters; but if they will not join another church, they should be dealt with severally as they deserve; if they desire to retain the old connection, let it be retained under such conditions as the church may deem best to impose; if they are indifferent or repellent, let their names be dropped with or without censure as the church may deem best. But unconverted members who have joined the church under a mistake, and perhaps under moral pressure, whose lives are free from scandal, may, if they desire it, be dropped without censure. To excommunicate such, with all the dishonor attaching thereto, were unjust and cruel. It damages the discipline of a church by putting no difference between a mistake and a sin.—*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, pp. 258-259.

May a Member Be Tried in His Absence? In some cases it is necessary that an accused member be tried in his absence. If the member accused has been guilty of a criminal offense, and is in prison, he may be represented at his trial by his next friend; but in every such case the accused should be served notice of the proposed action and permitted to choose the friend who shall represent him. Notice having been given, at a regular meeting of the church, of the charges against him and of the subsequent time at which a vote will be taken, he may be expelled from the membership of the church, if no objection is raised by any member.

In case the accused person is not in prison, but has left for parts unknown, a letter mailed to his last known place of address may be held to be a sufficient notice of the action to be taken against him. In such cases, however, the vote of suspension or expulsion having been moved and seconded, should commonly be laid upon the table for one or more weeks before final action. It is usually desirable that notices sent by mail be registered.

Excommunication in the Absence of the Offender. Thus the church excluded Mr. Eaton, first teacher of the school in Cambridge (Winthrop's Journal, i, 313). If it be asked, How is this consistent with the rule in Matt. 18? it is answered, in the language of one of the old Puritan writers, "Whatever is the dictate of the law of nature is the law of God." Otherwise, the delinquent might claim to be in good standing in the church, so long as he kept out of the way.—*Cummings:* Cong. Dict.

Should a Member Guilty of Crime Remain a Member? Perplexing questions sometimes arise in cases of members prominent in church work who have been overtaken in a fault and sentenced to imprisonment. Pathetic appeals are sometimes made that the names of these persons be retained on the church roll. In case the church is fully assured of the penitence of such a member, it may esteem it its duty to retain his name upon the roll and extend him a helping hand at the expiration of his prison term; but a church taking such action will need to observe extreme caution lest its sympathy with an offender cause it to forget its duty to bear an uncompromising testimony against the wrong which he has committed.

It often occurs that discipline is most difficult and complicated in the very cases whose grossness and wide publicity leave no doubt what should be done, but nevertheless make ordinary procedure next to impossible. In such instances Dr. Dexter wisely said:

Public Offenses. As where a church member should commit robbery or murder, or leave his own wife and marry another. Here, as in all other cases, what the gospel seeks, if possible, is the reformation of the offender, on the one hand, as really as the vindication of the honor of the church on the other. Hence, while in such cases of flagrant and public misdemeanor and dishonor, it may be suitable to pass at once a vote suspending such an offender from church privilege until his case can be investigated, all private preliminary steps should be taken before the actual trial; whose result must, unless the Spirit of the Lord interpose with a remarkable work of grace, and in his ignominious expulsion from all church privilege.—*Dexter:* Handbook, p. 107.

No Excommunication in Another Church. For although we may advise, exhort, warn, reprove, etc., so far as Christian love and power extend, yet we find no authority committed to one congregation over another for excommunicating. . . . Christ reserveth this power in his own hands.—*Ainsworth:* Communion of Saints, in Han. i, 285.

For What Offenses May a Church Try a Minister? A minister may be tried for any offense of which any member of the church could be tried, but in his capacity as a minister and as a pastor the grounds of action against him may be any one of three.

(1) *Gross Immorality.* This does not mean any small act of wrong-doing, but some serious departure from ethical standards inconsistent with his continued usefulness as a minister.

(2) *Neglect of Pastoral Duty.* This, too, must be a serious neglect, one that materially diminishes his usefulness as a minister, either in failure to study, attention to pastoral service, or such prejudice or infirmity of temper as unfits him for reasonable efficiency.

(3) *Essential Change in Belief.* This does not mean that the minister has no right to grow, but that he is guilty of such an essential modification of his doctrinal views as to disqualify him for the performance of his best work as pastor and teacher of his people.

Can a Local Church Expel a Minister? A local church can expel a minister from its own pastorate, but that neither terminates nor impairs his ministerial standing. It can expel him from its membership, and that act will impair but will not terminate his ministerial standing. Although without local church membership he cannot qualify as a minister in full standing or exercise the legal or spiritual functions of a minister until his disability is removed, the act of his expulsion from the local church can do no more than suspend his ministerial prerogatives and impair his standing Otherwise a local church might in an outburst of prejudice against its pastor depose him entirely from the ministry This it cannot do, but it can disqualify him from exercising his office until his disability is removed. This can be done by his securing membership in another Congregational church.

Any church expelling its minister from its membership would have a further duty, namely, that of bringing charges

against him before the Association or before a council called for the purpose in order to terminate wholly his ministerial standing.

No church should receive into its membership a minister who has been so expelled until there has been opportunity for the expelling church to formulate charges against him before the Association or the council, and the receiving of such a minister by another church under those conditions would be an unfriendly and unbecoming act.

If, however, a minister should be expelled from membership in a local church, and that church should decline or unreasonably delay to bring further charges against him with apparent intent maliciously to injure his ministerial standing, a sister church convinced that an injustice was being done him might receive him into its membership, but should first appeal to the former church either to restore him or to submit the case to trial.

Ministerial Standing and the Year Book. This Year Book list does not affirm the good standing of all who are upon it. It is made up of the names sent in by the registrars of state or local ecclesiastical bodies, or, in some states, of ministerial associations. It is only presumptive evidence as to the standing and character of those whose names are included.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 87.

Ministerial Standing Not in Local Church. Ministerial standing cannot be held in local churches. If the ministerial function were confined to the pastoral relation, and a man ceased to be a minister the moment he ceased to be pastor,—which some have held to be "the necessary verdict of the principles of Congregationalism" (Congregationalism, Dr. H. M. Dexter, 150)—then ministerial standing would be held in local churches, since a vote to remove a pastor from office would be his deposition from the ministry; and besides, he, while pastor of one church, would be a layman everywhere beyond that church. But this theory of the ministry was not embraced by the English or other Congregationalists, and soon ceased to be held in New England (Mather's Magnalia, ii, 239). In answer to the seventh point raised by the ministers of Old England, the ministers of New England, about 1638, held that a church might depose from his office an unfit or unworthy pastor; but if one should be set aside without sufficient cause, he would still remain a minister of Christ (Felt's Eccl. Hist., i, 368). This answer rests on the fact of a ministerial function wider than the pastorate, to which Christ calls men.—*Ross:* Church-Kingdom, p. 157.

Associational Membership a Necessity. In the decline of installation, ministerial standing has passed over to the Associations of churches. We have reached such proportions that we can secure good order in no less methodical way.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, pp. 89-90.

The utter failure of the older method in cases of ministerial discipline could have no better illustration than in Dr. Ladd's great book, in which, after showing how a local church might deal with an installed pastor, and possibly, by a stretch of local autonomy, with an acting pastor, he faced finally the crux of the question of a minister's relation to the churches apart from his responsibility to a local church, and in his answer put his entire system into involuntary bankruptcy.

If the further question be asked, What shall be done for the ministerial purity of notably impure and heretical men who are neither pastors of churches nor acknowledged members of any ministerial body? the question itself must be declared to be on the very verge of absurdity. The churches that wittingly hear them may be admonished, so that these blind leaders shall not be leaders of the blind. But, as for the men themselves, the purity of the ministry is best preserved by letting them alone, that alone they may fall into their ditch. From this ditch the memory of a former ordination will not preserve them; and, when they are once consciously there, a helping hand may best be extended to them for the restoration, not, in any case, of their ministerial standing, but of their characters, and for the saving of their souls.—Principles of Church Polity, p. 252.

May a Church Bring Action Against a Minister Who Is Not Its Own Pastor or One of Its Members? The only sensible answer is in the negative. There have been, however, suggestions of a contrary answer. One of them is held, though probably incorrectly, to have been given by the National Council, at St. Louis, in 1880:

Resolved (3), That the body of churches in any locality have the inalienable right of extending ministerial fellowship to, or withholding fellowship from, any person within their bounds, no matter what his relation may be in church membership or ecclesiastical affiliations, the proceedings to be commenced by any church, and to be conducted with due regard to equity.—Minutes of 1880, p. 17.

Of the wisdom of this resolution in its probable intent, and the vast unwisdom of its possible application to the

trial of a minister by a church of which he is not a member, Dr. Ross wisely said:

> The method of putting this inalienable right into operation for clearing the churches of unworthy ministers is manifestly separable from the right itself. The right may be exercised in one way at one time and place, and in another way at another time and place. The right must not be confounded with the method of exercising it. The method indicated in the resolutions is through a council called for the purpose, the proceedings to be commenced by any church. This method is so defective as to render the right which is inalienable practically inoperative. (a) A church may possibly, in rare instances, deal with its own pastor in discipline, but it is safe to say that it will never begin proceedings against the pastor of a neighboring church. If asked to do this, it will demur. (b) No better device for stirring up strife between two churches was ever imagined than the one given in these resolutions of the National Council, making it the duty of one church to begin proceedings against the pastor of a sister church. (c) A similar process for dealing with a wayward church [Plymouth Church, Brooklyn], instead of its pastor, has been tried a few times, stirring up the bitterest animosity, and utterly failing of good results.—Church-Kingdom, pp. 285-286.

For What Offenses May an Association Try a Minister? An Association may try a ministerial member for conduct unbecoming a minister, for disturbing the peace of the churches, or for heresy. If found guilty, he may be admonished, rebuked, suspended, or deposed from the ministry. He may be suspended with the provision that unless he shows repentance within a year, or at the end of some specified period, his name shall be dropped from the roll without further trial.

May an Association Try a Minister Who Is Not a Member? The responsibility of an Association for ministerial standing extends only to its own members. But either a district or state body may issue a protest to another District Association with reference to an unworthy act, affecting its own interests or the interests of the church at large, by a ministerial member of the Association to which the protest is issued. The following may serve as an example:

The pastor of a church in St. Louis went upon the lecture platform delivering addresses against the work of the Anti-Saloon League, and in this capacity entered another

state where an election was approaching, in which the churches generally were actively supporting the anti-saloon movement. It was charged that he was in the pay of the saloon interests, but this was not proved or necessary to be proved. Had he delivered these addresses in his own church and that church been satisfied, no Association in another state could properly have protested. But the case was wholly altered when he invaded other parishes under conditions such as have been described, and his act brought an inevitable and entirely proper protest from an Association in the sister state. It could not, of course, bring him to trial, but could and did protest against his unbrotherly act, and ask for an investigation and action by his own Association.

Authority of an Association Over Its Own Members. Neither a state nor local body has authority over a minister or church not a member of it by his or its own voluntary act. If it deems that it is necessary to proceed against a church or minister in this position, it should communicate with the body in which the membership inheres. It may of course decline to receive any applicant to its fellowship, being responsible for such action to the body whose letter of dismission and commendation is thus discredited.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 127.

May a Minister Be Tried by a Commission? An Association may appoint a commission to investigate charges against a minister, but the decision of the commission should be affirmed by the Association, and it must be affirmed in order to be valid unless the minister himself consents in advance to be tried by the commission, or subsequently submits to its judgment.

Can an Association Expel a Pastor? An Association cannot expel a pastor from his pastorate against the will of the church of which he is a member and pastor. The local Congregational church has the indisputable right to call as its minister a man who is not approved by the Association, but a minister so called or so retained has no standing as a minister outside of that particular local church. His name would appear in the Year Book, if at all, as that of a layman supplying a church. Marriages performed by him

would not be legal. A council would be compelled to receive him if he came as a delegate from the church, but not as pastor, nor could the church claim the right to send a lay delegate in addition. The local church might authorize him to administer the sacraments within that church, and the sacraments thus administered would be valid, but his ministerial standing would be impaired and could only be restored by the rescinding of the act of the Association which had impaired his standing. On the termination of said pastorate whatever of ministerial character he might have had as pastor of that church would wholly and finally cease.

Does Deposition from the Ministry Destroy Church Membership? Deposition from the ministry does not carry with it by the same act excommunication from the local church. The local church cannot confer ministerial standing, neither can it destroy it. The Association cannot confer local church membership, neither can it destroy it. A minister may be deposed from the ministry and still be worthy to be retained in church membership, or if unworthy of ministerial standing he may still be retained in church fellowship in the hope of his future repentance.

By Whom May a Minister Be Restored to Fellowship? A minister from whom fellowship has been withdrawn can be restored to local church fellowship by securing membership in a local church, and can complete his ministerial standing by securing fellowship in an Association. In such a case the acts of restoration should ordinarily be by the identical body that accomplished his deposition.

What Is the Process of Trial of a Minister? First—Complaint must be made against him by some reputable person, who should be a member in good standing of some church. The advisory committee or other appropriate standing committee of the District Association may itself bring the complaint, on direct evidence, or it may prefer charges on the ground of common fame; or, if he has been convicted of a crime by any court of record, that fact is a sufficient basis

for an immediate action which should be brought in the name of the officers of the Association.

Second—He should be served with a notice of the charges against him, and the time and place when his case will be tried. In case his address is unknown, notice should be given him by registered mail at his last known address as given in the Congregational Year Book.

Third—A minister is entitled to counsel, or he may plead his own case. He may introduce professional counsel, if he desires, but the Association may, and usually should, insist that the attorney representing him should be a member in good standing of some Congregational church.

Fourth—In the hearing of evidence, the ordinary rules of courts and deliberative bodies are to be followed without, however, insisting upon the technicalities of court procedure. A much wider range of evidence may be considered than would be admitted in civil courts. Ecclesiastical courts have no power to compel witnesses, and must secure such testimony as is available. Such courts are justified in giving considerably greater weight to appearances than in civil courts. In general, they must assume that acts, particularly when often repeated, mean what they seem to mean. Church courts cannot go behind closed doors, but may briefly consider the apparent reason why the doors were closed, or may challenge the right of the accused to screen himself behind them. In general, a minister's frequent visitation of a questionable place under circumstances and with apparent motives naturally exciting suspicion or indicating a wrong intent, must, in the absence of strong contrary evidence, be conceded as establishing a presumption of the form and kind of conduct which the nature of the place appears to indicate.

On the other hand, a minister must be entitled to every reasonable presumption in favor of his innocence. Where his previous record has been good, and especially if those who are accusing him appear to be actuated by any motive of malice or revenge, or if there be an appearance of a con-

spiracy for blackmail, or of an attempt to injure him in the interests of evil men whose enmity he has earned by fidelity to duty, a church court may very properly insist upon the very strongest evidence before consenting to destroy the reputation and usefulness of a man who may be falsely accused.

May a Church Court Censure a False Accuser? A church court may censure a false accuser, and it sometimes has a solemn duty so to do. In civil courts only the accused is on trial, but in ecclesiastical courts, in a very important sense, the accuser also stands before the bar. If he is not a member of the body before which he prefers the charges, the only opportunity of that body to conclude a case with justice may be to add a vote of censure of the accuser to that of exoneration of the accused.

To this end, a person preferring charges against a minister should be warned at the outset by the moderator of the grave nature of the thing he is about to do, of the legal and moral value of ministerial reputation, and of the grave responsibility assumed by one who would recklessly destroy so valuable an asset of an influential man. If the charges against the minister be not sustained, but it is apparent they were brought in good faith, a vote of exoneration will be sufficient, but if it appear they were brought in malice, the body before whom his case is tried will be fully justified in recording its judgment that the prosecution was malicious.

May an Association Delegate a Trial to a Commission? An Association may delegate the trial of a minister to a commission, but the final vote must be by the Association itself, and appeal may be had from the commission to the Association.

May an Association Try a Member for Heresy? An Association may try one of its own members for heresy. Evidence should be submitted, if possible in the precise words of some authorized publication, or by the testimony of actual witnesses, establishing the radical departure of

the member from the standards of orthodox Congregational teaching. In such a trial, creeds of acknowledged weight in the denomination may be used as a testimony of the faith of the denomination at the time when the creeds severally were adopted, and as showing the general trend of actual opinion. But the accused has a right to demand that the creed, which is the opinion of men, and of men probably dead, be weighed in the balance with the living opinion of the man accused. All opinions must finally be judged by the Holy Scripture as interpreted by the living Spirit of Truth.

May Ecclesiastical Trials Be Held in Private? Ecclesiastical trials may be held in private whenever in the judgment of the body conducting them it is desirable that this should be done.

May a Minister Be Tried by Council? A minister may be tried by a mutual council, or by an *ex-parte* council if he refuse to join in a mutual council. Rarely should a minister be tried by an *ex-parte* council, however, and seldom will the finding of such a council have weight. The Association is a body much more fit than such a council in determining without prejudice a question relating to the ministry. From the decision of a mutual council, regularly called and competent to pass upon the case, an Association will not permit an appeal to be taken to itself. It will commonly base its own action upon the finding of such a council officially reported to it. The Association before concurring in the finding of an *ex-parte* council should carefully inquire whether the council had jurisdiction, and has done substantial justice.

May a State Conference Try a Minister? A State Conference may not try a minister. Nevertheless, a State Conference has a right to judge of its own membership, and if it has reason to believe that a member accredited to it by a District Association is unworthy of such membership, it may request his Association to investigate his standing. When such membership, however, is finally established in

the District Association, the right to membership also in the State Conference is established.

May the National Council Try a Minister? The National Council may not try a minister, nor may it refuse to receive into its membership a person duly accredited by the churches.

May the Results of an Ecclesiastical Trial Be Published? Discipline by an ecclesiastical body extends only to such powers and penalties as are implied in membership in such a body. The general principle is that discipline by a local church may be published in and to the local church; that discipline by an Association may be made known to the members of the Association. Any publicity beyond this must justify itself in the nature of the case and the reason for the action. In the case of a minister expelled from an Association and thereby deprived of ministerial standing in the denomination, the fact of such expulsion and the charge upon which expulsion is grounded may be published in the denominational press; but this does not justify the widespread publication of his disgrace through any motive of revenge. The purpose of publicity is not the injury of the offender beyond such reasonable and necessary injury as is involved in the decision itself and the normal and proper publicity thereof. If reporters have been present during the trial, the reporters are entitled also to copies of the finding. If the trial has been in private, the publication should be confined to the result of the trial without detail. No absolute rule of law or of ecclesiastical custom exists that covers all cases. Inasmuch as ministerial standing in the Congregational denomination is nation-wide, the whole body of churches has a right to know, and be on their guard against, a man who has been found unworthy to continue in the Congregational ministry; but the publication of this knowledge must not be permitted to degenerate into vindictiveness. The purpose of publicity must be protection, and not persecution.

Dr. Boynton was correct in his judgment that expulsion

from church membership should not be accompanied by any vindictive action, though hardly right in maintaining that there should be no record other than the fact that the person expelled is not in fellowship. The record should state the reason for the act, whether "for an absence unexplained or a gross sin." And there are times when a more public statement must be made, though as a rule this is not necessary. Dr. Boynton said:

> It does not seem necessary or wise for a church in terminating membership to inflict censure, or indeed to express its judgment except as to the facts. The church can only record the fact that a certain person is or is not in its fellowship, that is, entitled to and actually participating in its work and privileges. The old idea of excommunication as a censure and curse was not a Scriptural one. Excommunication means simply out of communion. It is sufficient to record on the books of the church the declaration that such an one "is no longer in the communion of this church," and state the reason for this declaration. It may be an absence unexplained, or a gross sin; the statement of the fact suggests the measure of blame. Nor need such action be announced from the pulpit on the Lord's Day. That might do much more harm than good and disturb the service and distract attention. A church should always act in such a case with deep regret, and this should be manifested in each step of the proceeding and in the result and its record and announcement.—Congregational Way, pp. 79, 80.

XXI. THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

Have We Sacraments or Ordinances? An ordinance is an established custom, rule or appointment: a rite, ceremony or practice constituted by authority or recognized usage. A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. In this sense we have ordinances which are also sacraments. But if the term sacrament is used to indicate a magical sacerdotal operation, we regard it as little better than a superstition, and possibly worse. Our sacraments are ordinances appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ for his church, but have in them nothing of priestly magic.

Scriptural Order and Worship. It was with regard unto Church Order and Discipline, that our pious Ancestors, the Good old Puritan Nonconformists, transported themselves and their Families, over the vast Ocean to these goings down of the Sun. On which account, a Degeneracy from the Principles of pure Scriptural Worship and Order in the Church, would be more Evil in the Children of New-England, than any other People in the World.—*Cotton Mather:* Ratio Disciplinæ, iv.

The Permanence of Our Principles. Some [among us] are great Blessings to the Churches, as inheriting the Principles, Spirit, and Grace of their Fathers and Grand-Fathers; but many of them do not so. On which account, it is not at all to be wondered at, if they Dislike the Good Old Way of the Churches; yea, if they Scoff at it, as some of them do; or if they are willing to depart from what is Ordinarily Practiced in the Churches of Christ in New-England. For the Congregational Church Discipline is not Suited for a Worldly Interest, or for a Formal Generation of Professors. It will stand or fall as Godliness in the Power of it does prevail, or otherwise.—*Increase Mather:* Order of the Gospel, ii.

What Is the Congregational Doctrine of Baptism? Congregationalists teach that baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace, and that it typifies washing from sin, and union with Christ.

To Whom May Baptism Be Administered? Baptism is to be administered to believers and to their children.

In What Form May Baptism Be Administered? Baptism may be administered in a reverent application of water

to the body in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Controversies concerning the mode of baptism have comparatively little interest for Congregationalists. As to form, it is permitted to each member to be fully persuaded in his own mind. It is generally conceded by Congregational scholars that in the early Church baptism was commonly by immersion. Those who make this concession contend, however, that the mere form of the rite received no emphasis, or even any unmistakable definition, in the New Testament, and that to overemphasize the matter of form is contrary to the spirit of the gospel.

Did the Early Church Practice Baptism by Immersion Exclusively? We are certain that the early churches sometimes practiced baptism by other modes than immersion.

Dating from the early part of the second century, the instructions are to baptize if practicable in running water, but if no running water is available then in a pool, and if no natural body of water is at hand then in an artificial body, artificially heated, but in case none of these forms is practicable, then baptism is to be performed by affusion.

> Now concerning baptism, baptize ye thus: having said all these things beforehand, baptize ye into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost in living water. But if thou have not living water, baptize into other water; and if thou canst not in cold, in warm. But if thou have neither, pour out water thrice upon the head into the name of Father and Son and Holy Ghost. And before the baptism let the baptizer fast and the baptized, and whatever others can: and thou shalt command the baptized to fast for one or two days beforehand.—Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, ch. vii.

From this and other records it appears that immersion was the preferred and customary form, but it is certain that the Lord Jesus placed little emphasis upon the external form. An instructive illustration is found in the manner in which He observed the Passover. In the Jewish ritual it was set forth as a permanent ordinance that those who ate the Passover were to eat it with staffs in their hands and sandals on their feet; that they were to eat in haste

and go out quickly. At the time when Jesus lived, all these details were disregarded and Jesus and his disciples ate the Passover reclining, with sandals laid aside, and after the meal remained for a considerable time in conversation. It is quite inconceivable that our Lord, who himself so habitually disregarded mere form and who left the form of his own baptism so obscurely indicated and nowhere specifically enjoined, should have made any particular form of this or any rite a condition of membership in his Church.

May Infants Be Baptized? There is no recorded and indubitable instance of infant baptism in the New Testament. The number of cases, however, in which believers were baptized with their households and the fact that Jewish households commonly contained children, together with the fact that under the Jewish covenant infants were presented in the temple and brought up as children of the covenant, affords at least a presumption that the children may have been baptized. The Scriptures certainly contain no prohibition, and the valid testimony of experience is in favor of the practical value of such an ordinance. Children of believers are not to be regarded as belonging to Satan, but as belonging to Christ, and should be dedicated to Him and reared in expectation that they will make their parents' faith their own.

Infant Baptism. Congregationalists, in common with the majority of other Christians, hold that believers and their households are proper subjects of baptism, not because it was distinctly commanded by Jesus, but because the rite by which this was preceded was so administered, and because there are no indications in the New Testament that the Christian Church was to be narrower than the Jewish, and there are indications that it was as inclusive of the household. Children are not baptized in order to constitute any new relation between them and the Lord or his Church, but in recognition of the fact that the children of Christian parents belong to the family of God and have a right to the Christian teaching and example of the home and the church. The baptism of children is not, however, insisted on, but left to the individual conviction of parents.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 69.

Should Children of Non-Christian Parents Be Baptized? Each church is competent to decide for itself the conditions

under which children shall be accepted for baptism. It is commonly held that all children should be baptized whose parents will enter into covenant to train them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Should Dying Children Be Baptized? Dying children should not be baptized through any pretense that such an act is essential to their salvation. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," but a minister ought not to refuse to baptize a dying child whose parents desire the act to be performed, even if in their case something of superstition enters into the desire for the baptism. It may or may not be a time in which the parents can be instructed concerning the deeper meanings of Christian baptism, but the wise pastor will improve the opportunity and the days that follow to make the act of consecration one that includes the parents as well as the child.

Do Congregationalists Teach Baptismal Regeneration? Congregationalists do not teach, and rarely, if ever, have believed, in baptismal regeneration. Even those early Calvinists who believed that some children are non-elect commonly did not hold that baptism or the lack of it determined the fact of the election. The poem of Michael Wigglesworth, entitled "The Day of Doom," has sometimes been quoted to prove that Congregationalists once believed in the loss of unbaptized infants, but this is a mistake. The infants in that poem who were given a place "in the easiest room in Hell" were non-elect infants, and no reference was made to the question whether they were or were not baptized.

Congregationalists hold that the process of regeneration belongs to the inward working of the Spirit of God. Of this regeneration baptism is a beautiful and appropriate symbol, but it is not the cause or the agent of it.

If ever Congregationalists believed in the condemnation of any children by reason of Adam's sin, they held that view at a time when Christians generally were holding it, and that view of the fate of infants was probably never

worse than that of their neighbors, both Calvinistic and Arminian. The author of this volume has read somewhat extensively in the literature of Congregationalism and has never been able to discover in any book, sermon, or tract, by any American Congregational minister, any statement which would justify the declaration that American Congregationalists have ever believed in the eternal damnation of unbaptized children.

What Is the Status of Baptized Infants? Children who have been baptized and nurtured in the Church are not to be regarded as without the covenant, neither are they to be considered as full members of the church. They are to be cherished and instructed in full expectation that on their arrival at a suitable age they will gladly enter into the fellowship of the Church. They are not to be regarded as of the world, nor is it to be expected that their conversion will have those marks of struggle and surrender which belong to the life of certain sinners running to Christ. They are to be considered as children of God and of the Church. The confession of their faith should not be regarded as primarily a confession of sin, and their entering into the fellowship of the Church should not be thought of as, *ipso facto*, the abandonment of a life of sin. For them the pastor may profitably hold classes of instruction, particularly during the weeks of the winter and spring. It is eminently fitting that on Easter or Children's Day, or at the end of the year, these children should be received into full membership in the Church. The weeks of the Lenten season offer an increasingly favorable opportunity for such instruction as these young people require. It is appropriate that for such young people a special form of admission to the Church should be provided, and there is no valid reason why this should not be called a confirmation service.

A suitable form for such service has been provided in the author's Congregational Handbook, pp. 279-281.

Who May Administer Baptism? In ordinary cases bap-

tism is to be administered only by ordained ministers of the gospel. A church may for good reason authorize a licentiate or one of its deacons or other members to administer this ordinance, but this should be done only for good reason and in exceptional cases. However, even the Roman Catholic Church admits the validity of lay baptism, and Congregationalists cannot deny it when there is reverent intent to administer baptism as a Christian ordinance. It is customary in the Roman Catholic Church to instruct mid-wives to baptize infants dying at birth. One of the early accounts of capture by the Indians in New England records the fact that French missionaries had instructed their Indian converts to baptize white infants before they tomahawked them.

Who May Baptize. In itself considered, the laity also have the right to administer the sacraments, and to teach in the community. The Word of God and the sacraments were communicated to all, and may therefore be communicated by all Christians, as instruments of Divine grace. If we look at the order necessary to be maintained in the Church, the laity are to exercise their priestly rights of administering the sacraments only when the time and the circumstances require it.—Tertullian: Baptism, ch. 17. Cited by *Neander*, Ch. Hist., Vol. I, p. 796.

At first, all who were engaged in propagating Christianity, administered this ordinance [baptism], nor can it be called in question that whoever persuaded any person to embrace Christianity could baptize his own disciple.—*Mosheim:* Eccl. Hist., Cent. I., Part II, ch. iv, sec. 8.

There are positively no sacred rites or acts which it is declared in the New Testament must be administered by men ordained or in any way separated from the general body of Christians. The two sacraments are justly considered the most solemn of Christian ordinances. But even of them such administration is nowhere commanded.—*Jacob:* Eccl. Polity of the New Testament, p. 144.

There is no one passage in the New Testament which proves that it is the exclusive right of the elders to baptize. And yet the notion is tenaciously held. Coming as it does from the Church of Rome, and received from that source by the Protestant Episcopal Church, it has taken hold of other denominations.—*Davidson:* Eccl. Polity of the N. T., pp. 280, 283-286.

The supposed need in the case of evangelists and missionaries grows out of the assumption that only an ordained person has the right to administer baptism and the Lord's Supper. But that assumption is a legacy of popery which Congregationalism will do well to decline; since the Bible does neither affirm nor endorse it. Scripturally one of the deacons, or any brother of the church

whom it may authorize for the purpose, is competent—in the absence of the pastor—to baptize, or preside at the remembrance of Christ at the Lord's Supper.—*Dexter:* Congregationalism, p. 155.

I have found nothing in the Bible, and nothing in what I have seen of the earliest Christian writers, which implies that it was the peculiar duty, or the peculiar honor of this or that officer, to administer baptism.—*Leonard Bacon:* Manual of Ch. Polity, p. 58.

Baptism by Savages. One Jesuit came to me, and asked whether all the English at Loret (a place not far from Quebec) where the savages lived, were baptized. I told him they were. He said, "If they be not, let me know of it, that I may baptize them, for fear they should die, and be damned, if they die without baptism." Says he, "When the savages went against you, I charged them to baptize all children before they killed them; such was my desire of your eternal salvation, though you were our enemies."—*Rev. John Williams:* The Redeemed Captive, p. 65 (1696).

Baptism by an Unlawful Minister. Baptism, by an unlawful minister, of an unfit subject, and in an unsanctified communion and unlawful manner, is true baptism, unlawfully and falsely administered.—*John Robinson:* iii, 186.

Do Congregationalists Acknowledge Self-Baptism? Certain of the early Puritans baptized themselves, but this was not then regarded as regular, and is not considered as valid by Congregationalists.

Do We Acknowledge the Baptism of Other Denominations? All persons baptized by other branches of the Christian Church with intent to perform and receive Christian baptism are to be regarded as baptized.

Is Roman Catholic Baptism Valid? Persons who have been baptized in the Roman Catholic Church are to be regarded by Protestants as having been baptized. The Roman Catholic Church, while not the Church of Christ, is a part of the Church of Christ, and its errors of doctrine and government cannot properly be held to invalidate baptism performed within it.

The Validity of Roman Catholic Baptism. This seems to have been admitted by all the early Congregationalists.—*Hanbury:* i, 310, 311.

Where God requireth his people to come out of Babylon, He doth not require them to leave whatsoever is there had, but requireth them to have no more communion with her sins.—*Francis Johnson:* Treatise vs. Two Errors, in Hanbury, i, 169.

Is Baptism to Be Performed a Second Time? Ordinarily

a person once baptized is not to be re-baptized, but there is no reason why re-baptism should be held in any superstitious fear. If a person who was baptized in infancy comes to feel that he ought to be baptized as a part of his own personal confession of faith, he should be shown, if he can be shown, how beautiful and valid an act his own confession of Christ may be if he will perform it as fully making vital the act of his parents in his behalf. But if he still insists and feels that he cannot be comfortable in his own conscience without baptism as a part of his own confession, there is no valid objection to his being baptized. Some ministers in such cases employ the form "If thou art not already baptized, I baptize thee." There is no particular objection to the use of such a form, but Congregationalists generally do not regard it as necessary, or hold that re-baptism when performed as a requirement of conscience is a matter for disputation or of superstitious fear.

Are Sponsors Permitted in Baptism? Sponsors are not required, but may be permitted, in baptism in Congregational churches. The parents themselves should present their own children for baptism, and should covenant with God and the Church that they will train these children in the Christian faith. If they desire to associate with themselves any near friends or relatives who willingly share their obligation and covenant, there is no valid objection to their doing so.

Is the Baptism of an Excommunicated Person Valid? If a person has been baptized and afterward excommunicated from the Church his baptism is not invalidated. If he later repents and is restored to fellowship it is not necessary that he be re-baptized.

What Is the Lord's Supper? The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Church of Christ, instituted by Jesus Himself, and performed by the Church in all ages since in imitation of his example and in obedience to his command.

What Is the Significance of the Lord's Supper? The Lord's Supper is a memorial of the death of Jesus, a re-

minder of the providence and care of God in provision of bread for the bodies and souls of men, a tangible emblem of a spiritual grace which manifested itself in the gift of Christ, an expression of unbroken fellowship, and a pledge of the spiritual triumph of the Lord.

Are the Bread and Wine the Real Body and Blood of Christ? The bread and wine are not the real body and blood of Christ, and to seek to make them so is a harmful superstition.

Against this error of the Church of Rome all Protestant Churches have borne constant testimony, but since the Oxford Movement in England there has been an unhappy tendency on the part of the Romeward wing of the Episcopal Church to import this superstition into Protestantism. There is but one way in which the bread and wine can become a part of the body of Christ, and that is not to be found in any magical result of the blessing of the priest. All Christians are of the body of Christ. Partaking of his life they manifest to the world the fellowship of his sacrifice and the hope of the coming of his kingdom. The bread which becomes a part of their bodies becomes in them and not otherwise a part of the body of Christ.

How Was the Lord's Supper Regarded by the Early Church? The Lord's Supper in the early churches was first a common meal shared by all the members of the congregation. This grew to be an abuse even in the apostles' time, so that Paul's letters to the Corinthians show that it sometimes became the occasion of gluttony and drunkenness. For this reason the Lord's Supper came to be administered in simply a crumb of bread and a drop of wine, offering no temptation to the appetite.

The form in which the Lord's Supper was administered in the Church shortly after the death of the Apostles is clearly set forth in "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles":

> Now concerning the Thanksgiving [or Eucharist], give ye thanks thus: First concerning the cup: We give thanks to thee,

our Father, for the holy vine of David thy servant, which thou madest known to us through Jesus thy servant; to thee be the glory forever. And concerning the broken bread: We give thanks to thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou madest known to us through Jesus thy servant: to thee be the glory forever. As this broken bread was scattered abroad over the mountains, and being gathered together became one, so let thy church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom: for thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever. But let no one eat or drink of your Thanksgiving [or Eucharist], but those baptized into the name of the Lord: for concerning this also hath the Lord said: Give not that which is holy to the dogs.

And after being filled, give ye thanks thus: We give thanks to thee, Holy Father, for thy holy name which thou causedst to dwell [lit. tabernacle] in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which thou madest known to us through Jesus, thy servant: to thee be the glory forever. Thou, Almighty Master, didst create all things for thy name's sake; both food and drink didst thou give to men to enjoy, that they might give thanks to thee; but to us didst thou grant spiritual food and drink and life eternal through thy servant. Before all things we give thanks to thee that thou art mighty: to thee be the glory forever. Remember, Lord, thy church, to deliver it from every evil, and to make it perfect in thy love; and gather it together from the four winds, the sanctified church, into thy kingdom which thou didst prepare for it: but thine is the power and the glory forever. Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If anyone is holy, let him come; if anyone is not, let him repent: Maranatha. Amen. But permit ye the prophets to give thanks as much as they will.—Chs. ix and x.

Who May Administer the Lord's Supper? Under ordinary circumstances the Lord's Supper is to be administered by an ordained minister of the gospel, assisted by the deacons of the church. Only in exceptional cases should a church make use of its liberty and authorize an unordained person to administer the Lord's Supper. If a licentiate administers the Lord's Supper he does so, not by virtue of his licensure, but by vote of a local church.

When a church has no elders, the members may legitimately partake of the Supper. A deacon selected by the brethren may preside.—*Davidson:* Eccl. Polity of N. T., p. 283.

If any man, even a laic, be appointed by the church to administer the sacrament, if he does it, he does nothing but his duty, and neither offends against the faith nor against good order.—*Fabritius:* Quoted by Samuel Mather: Apology, p. 61.

Ordination seems originally intended for guarding against bad characters. I have therefore been much concerned to see the practice of administering the Lord's Supper obtain prior to it, which tends to set it aside, and will, I am persuaded, be the source of

many mishaps in the churches. I had long been of the opinion that there was no Scripture for confining the administration of the Lord's Supper to a minister. . . . I could wish that every church, when destitute of a pastor, would attend to the Lord's Supper among themselves.—*Andrew Fuller:* Works, ii, 662.

The Lord's Supper was originally a household rite, as was the passover feast among the Jews. It was kept among the early Christians with singleness of heart and from house to house. It was a beautiful thought that the father of the household should gather the family around him, and, in answer to the youngest, explain the meaning of the service, and with them celebrate the deliverance, whether from the kingdom of Egypt or of evil. By and by, it came to be a church ordinance, not by divine appointment, but by ecclesiastical arrangement, and came to be less frequent in its observance. Like all commemorations it hardened into a fixed ceremony with conditions carefully superimposed. It would be thought almost a sacrilege for a layman to officiate now, even in a Congregational church. That very word "officiate" indicates the change. It is well to protect the table of the Lord so that it may not be irreverently or carelessly approached, but the difference between what is essential and what is accessory should be maintained. Not a minister always or only, but a Christian man of faith and prayer might serve it best, and those who are invited should be not merely church-members, but those who are confessing, and loving, and serving the Lord Jesus Christ and living as his disciples.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, pp. 66-67.

Minister Dispenses Lord's Supper. The Supper of the Lord is to be dispenced by the minister of the Word, 1 unto the faithful of the same Body, 2 or commended to them by a like Body, 3 having examined and judged themselves, 4 and sitting down with him at the Lord's Table, 5 before whom the minister taketh the Bread, and blesseth it, breaketh it, and giveth it to the Brethren, with this commandment once for all, To take and eat it as the body of Christ broken for them, and this to doe in remembrance of him. In like manner also he taketh the Cup, and having given thanks, he giveth it to them with a commandment to them all, To take and drinke it as the blood of Christ shed for them, and this also to doe in remembrance of Him, 6 after all having partaken, they sing a Psalme.—*John Cotton:* The Doctrine of the Church, 2d ed., London, 1643, p. 7.

No persons may administer the sacrament but such as are ordained thereto.—Savoy Confession.

And this is agreeable to present, and, so far as I can learn, past practice of Congregationalists. How much of the principle of apostolical succession and holy unction is countenanced by this practice, may be a question.—*Cummings:* Cong. Dict., Lord's Supper.

How Is the Lord's Supper to Be Administered? Congregationalists are wedded to no one form of administering the Lord's Supper. It is generally received by the people sitting in their pews. The bread is first blessed and broken

by the minister and handed to the deacons, who first pass the plate to the minister himself and afterward to the congregation. When they have returned it, the minister passes the bread to the deacons in turn. After this, the minister pours out and blesses the wine, of which he first receives from one of the deacons, after which the wine is passed to each member of the congregation, and then by the minister to the deacons.

The deacons should not take the plates or cups from the table or return them to the table, but receive them from and return them to the minister.

The elements should be received reverently by each worshiper. It is not considered reverent to take bread or wine with gloved hand.

What Invitation Should Be Given to the Table? Each church is competent to determine the form of its own invitation. It is customary to invite members of all churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, and sometimes the invitation is made even more inclusive. No Congregational church attempts a narrower invitation than this.

Who Should Be Invited to the Lord's Supper? Much has been made of the invitation to the Lord's table. If it is his, we should not invite to it. It belongs to those who are of the family of Christ. We should welcome those who claim to be entitled to it. There is no great danger that the multitude of careless and unspiritual people will intrude upon it, if the service be kept simple and its spiritual meaning be kept prominent. The invitation used to be "to those who are in good and regular standing in other evangelical churches." A form which is very common now, and which is better, is, "We welcome to the table of the Lord all those who love him and confess him before men." This last clause takes it out of the range of sudden impulse, if there would be any great harm in that. If it is not our table, we should leave the acceptance to the consciences of those present, except perhaps that we should reason with one who was leading an immoral life. Even in such case his action would open the way to serious conversation and might be the beginning or the means of his conversion.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 68.

May an Unbaptized Person Partake of the Lord's Supper? Ordinarily baptism is antecedent to participation in the Lord's Supper, but we have no authority in Scripture for affirming that invariably it must be so.

Baptism. The church was not given to baptism, but baptism to the church; if admission to the church be by baptism, then casting out of the church must be by unbaptizing.—*John Robinson:* iii, p. 167.

Whether baptism is invariably a prerequisite to admission to the Lord's Supper was discussed by early Congregationalists, who held in general that baptism should ordinarily precede the Lord's Supper, but many of them recognized that there may be reasons why a particular person should be admitted to communion who has not been baptized.

May Non-Church Members Commune? Ordinarily church membership should be regarded as a prerequisite to Communion, but there are exceptional cases in which this rule should not be rigidly enforced. The invitation should be so phrased that it will ordinarily be accepted only by church members, but still provision will be made for those infrequent but reasonable exceptions which occur in the experience of almost every minister. The following is a convenient form of invitation:

"Ministering in the name of the Lord, this church invites to the table of the Lord all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and have publicly confessed Him according to His command."

Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Answer of the New England Elders to the Nine Positions is: "Church Communion we hold only with church members, admitting to the fellowship of the seals known and approved and orderly recommended members of any true church" (Hanbury, iii, 40). This they maintain by seven considerations, among which is this: They that are incapable of the censures are incapable of the privileges. Those not in covenant are incapable of the censures, therefore of the seals as privileges. Those not members of churches ordinarily ought not to come to the Communion, but there are exceptions.—*Isaac Watts:* Terms of Communion, Quest. vi.

Do Congregationalists Practice Close Communion? They do not; and have never been able to find any authority for such practice on the part of any church.

Open Communion. We have endeavored to show, that the practice of strict Communion derives no support from the sup-

posed priority of baptism to the Lord's Supper, in the order of the institution, which is exactly the reverse; that it is not countenanced by the tenor of the apostles' commission, nor by apostolic precedent, the spirit of which is in our favor; that the opposite practice is enforced by the obligations of Christian charity; that it is indubitably comprehended in the canon which enjoins forbearance towards mistaken brethren; that the system of our opponents unchurches every Pedobaptist community; that it rests on no general principle; attempts to establish an impossible medium; inflicts a punishment which is capricious and unjust; and finally, that, by fomenting prejudice and precluding the most effectual means of conviction, it defeats its own purpose.—*Robert Hall:* Works, i, 359.

Suppose you judge concurrence in the use of a liturgy a sin, and the unprescribed way a duty, yet who hath empowered you to make such sins exclusive from Christian communion? . . . Hath God forbidden any to be admitted to Christian communion, but such as are absolutely perfect in knowledge and holiness? Whose is this table? Is it the table of this or that man, or party of men? or is it the Lord's table? Then certainly it ought to be free to his guests; and who should dare invite others, or forbid these?—*John Howe:* Works, p. 184.

The churches of New England make only vital piety the terms of Communion among them; and they all, with delight, see godly Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Anti-pedobaptists, and Lutherans, all members of the same churches, and sitting together without offense in the same holy mountain, at the same holy table.—*Cotton Mather:* Ratio Disciplinæ, iv.

What Kind of Bread Is Used in the Lord's Supper? It is not necessary that any one kind of bread should be used in the administration of the Lord's Supper. The fact that our Lord and his disciples used unleavened bread does not necessarily furnish us a rule or example. They used the bread which was upon the table at that particular meal. The common bread of daily life is a sufficient and wholly appropriate symbol for the use of the Lord's Supper.

What Kind of Wine Is Used in the Lord's Supper? It is customary in Congregational churches to use the pure unfermented juice of the grape. Fermented wine is not commonly employed, and its use is properly to be discouraged. It is not advisable to use water or any other substitute. Jesus and his disciples drank of the "fruit of the vine."

Whether the wine which Jesus and his disciples used was or was not intoxicating is a question in nowise essen-

tial to the determining of the character of the wine to be used by modern Christians. Even if the wine Jesus used contained a small percentage of alcohol, the use of such wine in his day related itself quite differently to social custom and to public sentiment than the use of wine as a beverage does in our day.

How Often Should the Lord's Supper Be Administered? There is no general rule concerning the frequency with which the Lord's Supper should be administered. Each church is competent to make its own rule. It is not advisable to observe it so frequently as to cheapen the custom by constant and meaningless repetition. It gains in solemnity by its occasional celebration as opposed to an observance every Sunday. Commonly, once in two months is considered a sufficiently frequent observance.

May Special Communion Seasons Be Arranged? Any church is competent to arrange for special Communion services when occasion seems to make such services appropriate.

At What Time of the Day Should the Lord's Supper Be Administered? The Lord's Supper may be administered at any suitable time of the day. There is no virtue in the custom which obtains in some denominations of receiving the Lord's Supper fasting. Our Lord and his disciples ate the Lord's Supper late in the evening, and after the evening meal. There is no good reason why his disciples should not do the same. While the Lord's Supper is commonly administered at a morning service, some churches very profitably observe a twilight Communion.

Do Congregationalists Observe an Easter Communion? Many Congregationalists observe an Easter Communion. There is a certain felicity in so doing, though it is not wholly appropriate that the memorial of the Lord's death should be celebrated on the anniversary of his resurrection. Many churches observe with profit the Thursday evening preceding Easter.

XXII. SERVICES AND CEREMONIES

What Is the Law of the Christian Life? The law of the Christian life is love to God and man. It is not two laws but one. No man can love his neighbor in the highest and best sense without love for God; and no man can truthfully say that he loves God while hating his neighbor. The Christian life is both personal and social. It is personal, because every Christian must decide for himself the choice of good or evil. In the last analysis, but one thing is essential to the life of the Gospel, and that is the life of God in Christ revealed in and through the soul of the believer. But we are not born in isolation, nor do we live our lives apart. The Spirit of Christ imparted to all who will receive it is a social spirit. It is one Spirit, but widely and diversely manifested. Through the rich diversity of gifts the one Spirit of God incarnate in the life of the followers of Jesus makes the Church the Body of Christ.

What Is Christian Worship? Christian worship is the adoration of God, in the spirit of Jesus Christ, performed either in public or in private. That acceptable worship may be offered in private is attested by the command of Jesus. "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Public Christian worship is also a duty and a privilege. We are exhorted not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. That which made possible the work of the early church was the assembling of its members for worship and work.

The Sacrament of Common Worship. In respect to preaching and worship, the Congregational ideal tends to extreme high-churchism. It lays a maximum of stress on the supreme sacraments with a minimum of stress on the mediating ritual. Its preaching is ideally a true elevation of the host, and the personality of the preacher becomes the chalice of blessing. It is an ideal which demands of its preachers not merely a proclamation of the Gospel message, but a sacramental communication of the Living

Christ. In spite of an excessive disdain of the symbols of priesthood, it exalts the preacher to a height of responsibility to which no priest was ever elevated. For whereas the personality of the priest is an impertinent matter, if he is duly authorized and ordained, the personality of the preacher is pertinent in the highest degree for the conveyance of heavenly blessing. The condition of his being a medium of grace is a consecrated personality and not official ordination, so that our theory of the ministry is priesthood *in excelsis*.

Consequently, all worship is an act of "partaking." Every service is essentially of the nature of Holy Communion and no institution can exceed in solemn meaning the ordinary diet of worship. Therefore the Lord's Supper inevitably loses its uniqueness, while the other sacraments fall into very uncertain significance. Here Independency has approximated to Quakerism, though more in theory than in practice. This again is a principle upon which it cannot go back. But it has much to gain from a fuller recognition of the suggestive significance of the insignia of sacraments. It loses not a little spiritual influence through its neglect of appropriate ritual. It tends too much in the direction of the public meeting. Congregationalism, which is natively high-church, would increase in impressiveness if in this matter it reverted to Catholic tradition.—*Davis:* Congregationalism and Its Ideal, Constructive Quarterly, Sept., 1915.

What Are the Essential Parts of Public Worship? The essential parts of public Christian worship are prayer, the reading of Holy Scripture, song, religious instruction, and the administration of the sacraments of the church.

The early Christians had exceedingly simple forms of worship. They had no temple, no altar, no image, no ritual or priesthood.

Our earliest testimony outside the New Testament to the forms of Christian worship is contained in a letter of Pliny, the Younger, while governor of Bithynia, written to the Emperor Trajan about 109 A. D. He describes Christian worship as he had extorted its details under torture from some young women, apparently deaconesses.

"The Christians," he says, "affirmed that it was their custom to meet on a stated day before sunrise, and sing a hymn to Christ as to god; that they further bound themselves by an oath" (obviously the baptismal vow) "never to commit any crime, but to abstain from robbery, theft, adultery, never to break their word, nor to deny a trust when summoned to deliver it, after which they would sep-

arate and re-assemble for the purpose of eating in common a harmless meal" (Ep. 10:96). Justin Martyr, writing about A. D. 150, more accurately describes the forms of worship prevailing in his day: "On Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the books of the prophets are read, as long as time permits. Then, when the reader has ended, the president in a discourse instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these glorious examples. Then we all rise together and send upwards our prayers. And when we have ceased from prayer, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president offers prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability. The congregation assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each one present of the consecrated things, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well-to-do and willing give what each thinks fit, and the collected gifts are deposited with the president, who succors with them the widows and orphans, and those who through sickness or any other cause are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, in short, all who are in need" (Apol. 1:65, 67). Tertullian, writing somewhere near A. D. 220, describes the worship as follows: "Our meal," he writes, "explains itself by its name. It is designated by the Greek word for love (Agape). Whatever it costs, our outline is gain if we thus benefit the poor. This is the honorable occasion of our repast. By this judge its further regulations. As it is an act of religious service, it permits no violence nor excess. We do not go to the table until we have first tasted of prayer to God; we eat as much as satisfies the hungry; we drink as much as is profitable for the chaste. We satisfy ourselves as those who remember that during the night also God is to be worshiped; we converse as those who know that the Lord hears them. After water for the hands and lights are brought, each one is called upon to praise God, either from the Holy Scriptures or of his own mind; hence it is proved

how much he has drunken. As the feast began, so it is closed, with prayer. Thence we separate, not into bands for violence, not for roaming the streets, but to take the same care of our modesty and chastity as if we had been at a place of instruction rather than at a banquet" (Apol. 100:39).

What Is the Place of the Reading of the Scripture in Public Worship? In the early Church the reading of the Scriptures was inherited from the custom in the Jewish synagogue. At first the Old Testament only was read, with practical exposition and applications. Later the letters of the Apostles were added as giving practical advice. As the number of Christians increased who had no personal knowledge of the life of Jesus, readings from the Gospels were added.

The formal reading of Scripture apart from interpretation and prayer was not commonly practiced in the early Congregational churches. The public reading of a portion of Scripture as a separate part of public worship began in the First Church of Salem by vote of December 27, 1736, and in the Old South Church in Boston on April 24, 1737.

That there was occasional reading of the Scriptures in other churches in Boston is evident, and the Brattle Street Church practiced it as early as 1701. Chief Justice Samuel Sewall left his own church, the Old South, on Sabbath, November 30, partly to hear Rev. Eliphalet Adams, and partly as a protest against his own minister, Rev. Josiah Willard, who had cut off his hair and was wearing a wig. "He that condemns the Law of Nature is not fit to be a publisher of the Law of Grace," wrote the judge, as a censure of his own pastor; and he recorded in his diary that Mr. Coleman read distinctly the 137th and 138th Psalms and the seventh of Joshua, concerning the conviction, sentence and execution of Achan. Mr. Coleman had offered prayer before the reading. After the reading they sang the second part of the 69th Psalm to Windsor tune. "Then Mr. Adams prayed very well, and more largely; and gave

very good sermon from Gal. 4:18. Mr. Adams gave the blessing. In the afternoon Mr. Adams made a short prayer, read the 139th Psalm and the sixth and twentieth chapters of the Acts. Sung. Mr. Coleman made a very good sermon from Jer. 31:33. Pray'd. Sung. Contribution. Gave the blessing. I perceive by several that Mr. Coleman's people were much gratified to see me there. Several considerable persons expressed themselves so." Thus wrote Judge Sewall, less offended by the Brattle Street innovation of public scripture reading than by his own minister's wearing of a "wigg."

The public reading of the Scriptures had been opposed partly because it savored of set form, and partly because it was deemed better to have Scripture with exposition than without; but the custom spread rapidly, and soon public Bible reading was the custom in all the New England churches.

The Beginning of Public Scripture Reading as a Regular Part of Church Service in Boston. Lord's Day, April 24, 1737. The Brethren of the church stay'd, and Voted.—That the Holy Scriptures be read in Public after the first Prayer in the morning and afternoon; And that it be left to the Pastors; what parts of Scripture to Read and what to Expound.—Records of the Old South. May 1. We began the Public Reading of the Scriptures. I read I chap. Genesis. Mr. Prince read I chap. Matthew. I spake a few words by way of Exposition and Exhortation. Then preach'd from I Thes. 5:27, "I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren."—*Rev. Joseph Sewall:* quoted in Hamilton Hill's History of the Old South, Vol. I, p. 480.

Scripture Reading in Salem. Voted, that the Scriptures be read as part of the Public worship.—Records of the First Church at its re-organization, Dec. 26, 1736.

What Is the Office of Prayer in Public Worship? Prayer in its various forms of petition, intercession and thanksgiving was practiced in the early Church from the beginning. It was inherited from Judaism and sanctioned by the custom of Jesus and the Apostles. Public prayer has always had a prominent place in public worship in Congregational churches.

Public Prayer. Extempore prayer has been the general custom

with our ministers, sometimes too unstudied and left too much to the impulse of the time. Some of our most thoughtful and conscientious pastors have made a study of liturgical forms, and out of their familiarity with them have either lifted their own expression to a higher level or occasionally have enriched the service by the use of prayers which have come to be the possession of the Church Universal. Familiarity with the prayers of the Psalms and other Scriptures and with later forms of devotional literature cannot be too strongly commended.—*Boynton:* The Congregational Way, p. 62.

May Written or Printed Prayers Be Used by Congregationalists? Congregationalists recognize the liberty of each Christian and each local church to pray in any manner that ministers to the spiritual life. The contention of the early Puritans was not that prescribed prayers were in themselves sinful, but that no civil or ecclesiastical body had power to prescribe a form of prayer which must be used. Although some of the Puritans went to the extreme of denouncing all written or printed prayers, their general contention was not that these are unlawful, but that they are unprofitable.

Any Congregational church is at liberty to make such use as it desires of the liturgy which we have inherited in the Book of Common Prayer and otherwise. The historical attitude of this denomination, however, has been one of consistent protest, first against the right of any external authority to impose a formal prayer, and secondly, against the habitual use of any form in a manner that hampers the free spirit of worship.

Christ Made No Prayer-Book. Christ never provided a prayer-book, but a Bible for his people.—*Cotton Mather.*

Not a Sin, But Not So Profitable. Every form of prayer prescribed by men is not absolutely nor simply a sin; yet . . . it is not so profitable, but rather hurtful, in many cases of it, as making holy zeal and other gifts of the Spirit in many to languish.—Confession of Jacob's Church.

We practice, without condemning others, what all sides do allow, public prayers by ministers out of their own gifts.—The Apologetical Narrative.

Worship Must Be Natural. Now, above all, worship must be natural. Provided that the form of worship expresses most naturally the feelings of the congregation, no sensible man will be disposed (unless it be unlawful) to put down, though he may deplore, any kind of service, however bold or florid, unattractive or sensuous, it may seem to him. It is better that the children of

men should speak to their Divine Father, as to their human fathers, naturally though wrongly, than rightly but unnaturally.—*W. L. Clay:* Essays on Church Policy, London, 1868.

Free from Bondage to a "Stinted Liturgy." To conclude, seeing our Christian liberty frees us from binding our selves to any religious observances, wherunto the written Word doth not bind us; and seeing spirituall prudence directs us to chuse those wayes which on all hands are confessed to be safe, avoiding those that are doubtfull and hazardous, and seeing it will not be safe for us needlessly to swerve from the constant practise of all Churches that are recorded in the Scriptures, that held forth as a cloud of witnesses for us to follow in matters of this nation; we therefore, may not, do not, dare not, use that forme of prayer, and stinted Liturgie in those Churches; more particularly in that we do not use that Forme of Prayer and stinted Liturgie which is in use among your selves: this and such other like Reasons have induced us thereunto.—*Richard Mather:* Church-government and Church-covenant discussed, London, 1643, p. 57.

What Is the Use of Singing in the Church? Early Christian songs were largely taken from the Psalms, but hymns came to be composed very early, and of the making of hymn books there is no end. There were many contentions in the Puritan churches as to whether unconverted persons ought to be permitted to join in the singing of Christian hymns, and whether hymns other than those found in the Bible might be sung. It is the judgment of Congregational churches that singing should be joined in by the whole congregation and that free use should be made of the poetry of the church in all ages.

Ought Unconverted Persons to Sing in Church Choirs? The question whether unconverted persons ought to be employed in church choirs is a question not always easy to decide. Church singers should be regarded as leaders of public worship and on no account should irreverent or ungodly people be employed in this sacred work. It need not always be maintained, however, that a church singer must of necessity be a member of the church.

What Is the Place of Preaching in Christian Worship? In the New Testament churches preaching had a foremost place. The sermon was commonly a missionary address, exhorting to confession of sin, the new life in Christ and steadfastness of conduct in the Christian way. It was by

what seemed the foolishness of preaching that the apostles expected the conversion of the world to Christ. Preaching has always received a special emphasis in the Congregational churches. It has been maintained that Christian congregations needed instruction from the Lord, and also from godly and learned men through whose testimony obedience and faith are inspired in the hearts of the hearers.

What Is the Congregational Doctrine of the Sabbath? The Congregational churches believe in the Christian Sabbath, commonly called the Lord's Day or Sunday, as a day of rest and worship. It is not regarded as a day of bondage, but of spiritual privilege. But the law of Christian liberty is not license to disregard an institution established of God, and justified by human experience. The Sabbath was made for man; and the method of its observance should be such as to promote the physical, moral and spiritual well being of men. The Church may well expect of its members such an observance of the Lord's Day as to strengthen their influence for good in the life of the community.

How Do Congregationalists Regard Prayer Meetings? The prayer meeting as an established institution took its rise in the notable revivals of the early part of the nineteenth century. As now observed in our churches it is less than one hundred years old. It has proved a mighty influence for good and its decline cannot be regarded as a hopeful sign in any church. It need not be inferred, however, that the prayer meeting must remain unmodified or that it must be conducted along precisely the lines that have characterized its development in the past. Some form of meeting should be continued in which the voice of the church membership is heard and in which there is opportunity for conference and prayer.

The weekly prayer meeting of the church is also its ordinary business meeting. Nearly all business in a local church can be transacted at any regular prayer meeting, though special business should require public notice. The proposed call of a pastor or the termination of a pastorate,

the purchase or sale of real estate, or the appropriation of any considerable sum of money, excepting for ordinary repairs, are obvious exceptions and should not be undertaken without previous notice or careful conformity to some established rule of the church.

How Do Congregationalists Regard the Week of Prayer? The Week of Prayer, first proposed by the Evangelical Alliance in 1859, became a more than national observance, and Congregationalists have heartily joined in it. In many communities the opening week of the new year has proved a profitable period for prayer and mediation; in others it has proved less favorable because of severe weather, the pressure of business incident to the closing and opening year, and the reaction following the holidays.

Do Congregationalists Observe Holy Days or Fast Days? Congregationalists are at liberty to observe any religious festivals that assist their spiritual life. This they may do either individually or by congregations, but there is no authority that can require any general observance of particular religious festivals or fasts among Congregationalists.

How Do Congregationalists Regard Easter and Christmas? The early Congregationalists refused to observe either Easter or Christmas, counting them purely human festivals clearly traceable in origin to the heathen religions. These festivals are now generally observed among us, not as imposed by external authority, but as offering particularly favorable opportunities for the celebration of the birth and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, in common with Christians generally.

How Do Congregationalists Regard Lent? Congregationalists regard Lent as a purely human institution, resting on no divine command and carrying with it no obligation which one Christian individual or church has a right to impose upon another. It is regarded, however, as a favorable time for religious emphasis, a time when social life somewhat abates and when opportunity is afforded for

religious instruction preliminary to Easter and for catechism classes in preparation for church membership on the part of young people.

What Is the Attitude of the Church Toward Current Reforms? The Church exists for the glory of God and the welfare of humanity. Nothing that relates to human well being is foreign to its interests. It is the duty of the Church to proclaim the Good News to all men, to support the institutions of charity and compassion, and to labor for the spread of intelligence, justice, temperance, peace, and righteousness in all the earth.

It is not to be understood, however, that the Church is merely a platform for the exploiting of all possible theories that come in the name of philanthropy or reform. Those men do err, not knowing the Scripture, who assume that the chief business of the Church of Christ is to conduct a campaign or exploit a theory of sociology. Reformers have sometimes been justly impatient at the conservatism of the Church, but quite as often have shown unwisdom and lack of charity in their harsh judgments of a conservatism not wholly unwise or unjustifiable. It is a fair question and one that cannot be settled out of hand, how far the church as a church ought to enter into questions of legislation and political controversies. Errors have been committed in both directions, and it is better to avoid too hasty judgments. The Church is in the world for the sake of bringing the world to Christ, but that result is not always to be attained by scheduled program and machinery. Not by saying "Lo, here" nor "Lo, there" are we to discover the kingdom of Christ; and that kingdom often suffereth violence at the hands of its well-intentioned or over-zealous friends, whose first love is for some particular philanthropy or reform. One needs to read with much care the life of Jesus in his relation to the various reforms and evils of his own day. The lesson will often teach us greater patience and less holy violence.

What Is the Relation of the Christian Minister to

Marriage? In the view of early Congregationalists marriage was not to be regarded as a sacrament, but as a holy contract between one man and one woman to live together as husband and wife. For this reason it was often held that ministers should not solemnize marriages. Not until 1692 did the Massachusetts laws provide for the solemnization of marriages by ministers. But while marriage is not a sacrament, it is much more than a civil contract; it is a solemn service, and one in which the church and its ministry have a legitimate and helpful share. One of the most important of all present-day questions relates itself to the greater sanctity of the home. This can be effected only by investing marriage with greater solemnity.

A minister is not legally necessary to the solemnization of marriages. These may be performed, in most if not all states, by judges, justices of the peace, and others. It is not only allowable but eminently desirable that matrimony should be regarded as a sacred institution not to be entered upon lightly or unadvisedly, but reverently, soberly, discreetly, and in the fear of God. No other person is so well fitted as the pastor to solemnize this holy institution. A minister who performs a marriage acts as an officer of the court as well as a representative of the Church, and should be scrupulously careful to conform to all the laws of the state in which the marriage is solemnized. From the court he receives the document which evidences his authority, and to the court he must make legal certificate.

Who May Solemnize Marriages? Marriage laws differ in the several states, but commonly no minister of the gospel is permitted to solemnize a marriage until he has been ordained according to the customs of his denomination. In a few states a licentiate may solemnize a marriage, but Congregational practice is not favorable to this method, and in most states a Congregational licentiate attempting to perform a marriage will expose himself to fine and perhaps imprisonment.

What Should Be the Minister's Attitude Toward

Divorce? Christian ministers ought to discourage divorce and seek in every reasonable way to maintain the sanctity of the home. They should refuse to remarry divorced persons whose separations have occasioned scandal, or whose re-marriage would tend to lessen the sanctity of the marriage relation. It is not commonly held, however, by Congregational ministers that no divorced persons should remarry, or that the minister should in every case refuse to marry where legal and moral requirements appear to have been met.

In What Form Should Marriage Be Performed? No particular form of words is legally necessary to the solemnization of a marriage. Two persons having a marriage license, who stand before a Christian minister and in the presence of witnesses take each other as husband and wife, become so by any form of words or act wherein they manifest their intention; nevertheless it is appropriate that such a relation should be entered into with dignified forms of service.

Suitable forms will be found in the author's Congregational Manual, pp. 285-292.

Is a Marriage Valid Performed Without License? A marriage performed by a minister without license is legally valid, but the minister himself is subject to fine or imprisonment.

Is a Marriage Valid When Performed as a Joke? No marriage ought ever to be performed as a joke, and no Christian minister should have any share in so undignified, unworthy, and dangerous a farce. Marriages performed as a joke have often been decided valid in the eyes of the law, and have occasioned great trouble and disgrace to those engaged in them.

Should Ministers Conduct Funerals? Funeral services should be conducted by ministers of the gospel. This was not the rule of the Puritan fathers. Their reaction against the forms of the Established Church led them to protest

against all religious services at funerals, but this was an unreasonable prohibition.

The First Independent Church in England say, in their Confession, art. xxiii: "Concerning making marriage, and burying the dead, we believe that they are no actions of a church minister, neither are ministers called to any such business; neither is there so much as one example of any such practice in the whole Book of God, either under the law or under the gospel; without which warrant we believe it unlawful, whatsoever any minister doth, at any time and place, especially as a part of his ministerial office and function." Cotton Mather, in his Ratio Disciplinæ, says of the New England practice: "In many towns, the ministers make agreeable prayers with the people, come together at the house to attend the funeral of the dead, and in some they make a short speech at the grave: in other places, both these things are wholly omitted."—*Cummings:* Congregational Dictionary.

May a Layman Conduct a Funeral Service? Where a minister cannot be obtained, a layman may conduct a funeral service. The captain of a ship, the teacher of a mission school, or other reputable and competent person, may read the burial service and speak such words of consolation as are appropriate.

Forms of burial services may be found in the Congregational Manual, pp. 293-300.

Should Funeral Services Be Conducted in the Church Building? The church building is the spiritual home of the members, and belongs to their use in the solemn experiences of life. While it is the house of the living God and He is the God of the living and not of the dead, it is fitting that it should be available for the spiritual needs of the people. Few private houses are constructed so as to be convenient places for funerals. The death often occurs under circumstances which involve great inconvenience if the funeral service is to be held there. If the church auditorium is too large, the church vestry or lecture room may suitably be used and should be freely offered to all who need it. The church should rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.

XXIII. THE AUTHORITY OF CONGREGATIONAL CREEDS

Is There a Congregational Creed? There is no creed which Congregational churches are bound to accept, but there are creeds which Congregationalists receive as containing the substance of doctrine generally accepted among us. These written symbols are of value, each as recording a high water mark of Christian opinion of the age in which it was written. Congregationalists claim their full heritage in the common creeds of Christendom. All these are ours. The early fathers, the great leaders of the Reformation, and the saints and scholars of the past are part of our priceless heritage. All of them expressed, each in the language of his own time, great common truths of the Christian faith. Congregationalists receive these creeds and later creeds with respect; but no one of these, either ancient or modern, stands in such authoritative relation to our Congregational system that it can be imposed upon the conscience of any Congregational church or any Congregational worshiper.

Platforms and Confessions. We hold it not unlawful to have a platform; . . . yet we see no ground to impose such a platform on churches, but leave them their liberty therein (*Welde:* Answer to Rathband, in Han. ii, 296). Rathband wonders "how the New England churches fell into so exact a discipline without a platform!" Welde informs him, that it was "because they had their discipline from the Scriptures," the best and the most consistent directory in the world.—*Cummings:* Art. Platforms.

Platforms and confessions were never set up as standards . . . they are lights, which all are free to use or not as they please.—*Mitchell:* Guide, lvi.

Samuel Mather, alone of all the Old Congregational authors to my knowledge, maintains that the Platform is "a holy pact or covenant," renewed and transmitted by the successive councils, synods, and right hands of fellowship, performed by virtue of it; as though these things could not be done, according to the Scriptures, agreeably to the Platform, without receiving the whole Platform as a code of ecclesiastical laws. His reasoning is the more remarkable, considering his rigid Congregationalism and lucid demonstrations of many principles totally subversive of this. His great-grandfather, who drafted the Cambridge Platform, held sentiments exactly the reverse of these.—*Cummings:* Cong. Dict., Platform.

The freedom of the early Congregational churches from credal tests for membership is strikingly illustrated in the fact that some of them that were lost to the denomination in the Unitarian movement have never changed their covenant from that of their Puritan establishment, and could easily become orthodox churches again with no further change of covenant. A committee appointed at the annual meeting of the American Unitarian Association in 1900 to inquire as to covenants in use in Unitarian churches found that in a very large proportion the covenant, with a membership distinct from that of the parish or congregation, had lapsed; but said:

> A new conception of church membership, in our branch of the Congregational Church at least, has been adopted. To those who are acquainted with the evolution of New England Congregationalism, it will not be called a new conception, but, on the contrary, a return to that plain and simple and absolutely unaffected religious attitude which characterized the first churches established on these coasts. It is a curious and important fact that, during the first century of Puritanism in New England, there was practically nothing in the way of a creed which the churches imposed upon the individual by any ecclesiastical authority. The First covenant was so perfectly free from all cant and dogmatism that one might imagine it to be the bond of fellowship of one of our latest Unitarian movements. It says:
>
> "We covenant with the Lord, and one with another; and do bind ourselves, in the presence of God, to walk together in all his ways, according as he is pleased to reveal himself unto us in his Blessed word of Truth."—p. 23.

How Are Creeds to Be Interpreted? In general, a creed is to be interpreted according to the plain and reasonable understanding of its words used in their ordinary sense, but this statement must be qualified in two important particulars. First—Theology, as truly as any other science, must make use of technical phrases, and words used in Christian creeds must be employed with the full breadth of interpretation which applies to those same terms in theological discussion. Second—Every creed must be interpreted in the light of what its words meant to those who used them, and also in the light of what is now seen to be the logical import of their meaning in the progress of Christian truth.

Henry Ward Beecher illustrated this principle in his

reply to the question, "Are you a Calvinist?" He replied, "Yes," and then added, "I believe what Calvin would have believed if he were now living." Only with such liberty of interpretation can any creed which originates in one generation be offered for acceptance by another.

Should Creeds Be Used as Tests? Creeds should not be used as tests of fitness for church membership. They may be used, however, as tentative standards by which to judge of the soundness of a teacher, or a minister, but never in such use is it to be implied that any creed represents or ever can represent a finality in Congregationalism.

Creed Tests. Confessions, when made by a company of professors of Christianity, jointly meeting to that end, the most genuine and natural use of such confessions is, that, under the form of words, they express the substance of the same common salvation. . . . And, accordingly, such a transaction is to be looked upon but as a meet or fit medium whereby to express that their common faith and salvation, and in no way to be made use of as an imposition upon any. Whatever is of force or constraint, in matters of this nature, causeth them to degenerate from the name and nature of confessions, and turns them from being confessions of faith into impositions and exactions of faith; . . . there being nothing that tends more to heighten dissentions among brethren than to determine and adopt the matter of their difference under so high a title as to be an article of our faith.—Preface to Savoy Confession.

Churches have a right to say on what conditions others, either individuals or bodies of men, shall share their fellowship. They can enter into fellowship with others with whose principles they more nearly agree.—*Upham:* Ratio Disciplinæ, p. 57.

This reasoning seems to hold only on the supposition that churches are strictly voluntary, in distinction from divinely instituted, bodies. If churches are of divine institution, then all true Christians have a right to share in them all the privileges of the sons of God. It is their Father's table and their Father's church; and what right have their brethren to debar them?—*Cummings:* Cong. Dict., "Confessions of Faith; Their Use and Abuse."

Freedom in Organization. And so a people may erect and establish what forme of Government seems to them most meete for their civill condition . . . and so undeniably it follows that a people as a people naturally considered (of what nature and nation soever in Europe, Asia, Africa or America) have fundamentally and originally, as men, a power to govern the Church, to see her doe her duty, to correct her, to redresse, reform, establish, etc.—*Roger Williams:* The Bloudy Tenet, p. 137.

The Puritans and Their Neighbors. Neither is it true that we suffer no man of any different Conscience or worship to live in our Jurisdiction. For not to speake of Presbyterians, who doe not

only live among us but exercise their publick Ministry without disturbance, there be Anabaptists, and Antinomians tolerated to live not only in our jurisdiction, but even in some of our churches. —*John Cotton:* The Bloudy Tenet Washed, p. 169.

Liberty of Conscience. But we readily grant you, libertie of conscience is to be granted to men that fear God indeed, as knowing they will not persist in heresie, or turbulent schisme, when they are convinced in conscience of the sinfulness thereof.

But the question is whether an Herotique after once or twice admonished (and so after conviction) or any other scandalous or heinous offender, may be tolerated either in the church without excommunication, or in the commonwealth, without such punishment as may preserve others, from dangerous and damnable infection. This much I thought needful to be spoken.—*John Cotton:* The Controversie Concerning Liberty of Conscience in Matters of Religion, 1646, p. 14.

May a Minister Be Expelled for Heresy? Heresy trials among us are happily rare. We stand historically for freedom of thought and utterance. A pastor is expected to accept for substance of doctrine the creed of the church of which he is pastor, and to teach no views in essential disregard of that creed. But a creed is the opinion of men, usually dead, and at every point in a minister's life he is at liberty to ask that his own opinions, as those of a living man, be weighed in an even balance with the opinions of dead men expressed in creeds. He has as good a right to make a creed as any dead man had while living, and more right to ask for its consideration in the present than any dead man has to insist that his creed shall continue to rule the opinions of men who are now as much alive as he was when he wrote his creed. But unless the minister can convince his church that its creed is wrong, he must either conform his teaching to the creed which the living members insist upon maintaining as the creed of the church, or he must go elsewhere. He cannot be driven out for a minor difference of opinion; there must be an essential and harmful departure from fundamental Christian faith.

In theory Congregational churches require of their ministers only such statements of faith as they require of other members. But practically a minister must be expected to possess a larger faith than the church requires of its humbler members.

A Minister's Faith. It has been contended that the only qualification for church membership is personal faith in Christ; but this is not the only qualification for church office. To decline to admit a man into the church on the ground of erroneous opinions which are not inconsistent with Christian Faith would be a violation of the laws of Christ and of the obligations of Christian brotherhood; but in appointing a minister the church is bound to consider not only whether his personal faith in Christ is sincere, but whether, in its judgment, he is a competent teacher of Christian truth. It has to rely on him for a larger knowledge of the Christian revelation and for the expression and discipline of its devotional life; if he holds any grave errors, if he has an imperfect apprehension of any of the great facts of the Christian Gospel, he cannot render them this service.

If, after the election of a minister, it is discovered that his religious faith differs widely from the religious faith of the church, if on doctrinal questions of serious weight the church believes that he is in serious error, the church has authority to depose him. His deposition for such a cause is no encroachment on the rights of conscience.

The church has its rights as well as the minister. The minister exists for the church, not the church for the minister. It cannot be seriously maintained that the principles of religious freedom require that a Christian congregation should be compelled to listen to preaching which it believes to be out of harmony with the teaching of Christ and pernicious to its own religious life; or that it is bound to provide for the support of the preacher. This would be to bind the church in chains under the pretence of giving freedom to the minister. The claims of freedom are satisfied if a minister is at liberty to preach to whatever congregation is willing to receive his ministry.

When the question is seriously raised whether a minister is faithful to the revelation of God in Christ, the church should be careful to distinguish between the substance of the revelation and the theological forms in which it may be expressed; between the supreme facts of the Christian Gospel and truths of a secondary order. The same truths rarely receive the same intellectual expression in two successive centuries, and a man may have a deep and earnest faith in the central elements of the Gospel of Christ who is unable to give assent to them in the terms to which his church has been accustomed. He means what the church means, but he cannot help saying it in a different way. It is possible that such a divergence of language and forms of thought may be inconsistent with his religious usefulness as pastor of that particular church; but it is also possible that, if the church is patient and trustful, it will discover that the intellectual method of the minister is better than its own, and that the new terms in which the great Christian truths are stated are more exact than the old.

When what are regarded as the doctrinal errors of a minister do not relate to the central truths of the Christian Faith, there is still stronger reason for patience and trust, if the church is sure that his grasp of the central truths themselves is vigorous and firm, and if it is conscious of receiving spiritual benefit from his ministry. It may be that he is right and the church wrong. He has

come to be its teacher, and it should assume that it has many things to learn. Or it may be that in time the minister himself will approximate more nearly to the common beliefs of the church. Absolute identity of theological opinion between a minister and his church is impossible in a period of theological transition like our own. But a church is disloyal to Christ if it endures a ministry which is unfaithful to the substance of the Christian Gospel.—*Dale:* Handbook, pp. 187-190.

Christian Liberty. II. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or not contained in it; so that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience, and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

III. They who upon pretence of Christian liberty do practise any sin, or cherish any lust, as they do thereby pervert the main design of the grace of the gospel to their own destruction, so they wholly destroy the end of Christian liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.—Boston Confession of 1680, xxi, 2, 3.

What Are the Ethics of Creed Subscription? Congregationalists have comparatively little experience in creed interpretation. They are little given to the habit of reciting old creeds, and when they make new ones they regard them as instruments whose period of service is dependent on the extent of their serviceability. They know that the Apostles' Creed did not originate with the apostles, nor the Nicene Creed in the Council of Nice, nor the Athanasian Creed with Athanasius, and they hold these creeds in respect because of their antiquity, their spiritual earnestness and the faith which, incompletely and faultily, they embody. Congregationalists do not stand in any awe of these symbols on account either of their pseudo titles or the ill-merited infallibility with which some men living in modern times, but thinking in ancient terms, have ascribed to them. When we want a creed we make one, or pick up almost any creed that we find at hand; use it so long as it rings true to our thinking, and then get another or go without. We can live without creeds, and be little the worse, and possibly the better for it.

The people of other communions who continue to recite

the creeds of other days and yet hold to the faith of the age in which they live have learned an art of interpretation almost unknown to us. They make the ancient form a vehicle for the expression of their modern thought and feeling.

For instance, their creed says, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," and these men believe that the spiritual body may not be chemically identical with the material body at the precise moment of death, even as that body is chemically wholly different from the same body seven years before. So they ask themselves, "What did the ancients mean by the resurrection of the body?" And they answer, "The preservation of identity of personality."

Now, their men believe in the preservation of identity of personality, and know what the ancients did not know, that personality can survive complete physical change. Hence, they continue to recite, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," and leave the mystery to God.

We Congregationalists have not accustomed ourselves to quite such mental agility as these interpretations require. We have no occasion to sit in judgment on other denominations in which this careful credal analysis has become a fine art, and an almost necessary one. But we do need to remember that if we are to use ancient creeds at all we must reserve to ourselves all the liberty which our Congregational fathers reserved to themselves and to us, in such flexible phrases "for substance of doctrine."

That is an elastic phrase, and was intended so to be. Only by reason of its elasticity would our fathers consent to use creeds at all. It is not the form, but the faith which is vital in any creed. It is not the outward sound, but the inward substance, of faith which makes a creed other than an intolerable fetter.

We Congregationalists do not seek to encumber our children with a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear, but stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. The creeds are a testimony, not a test,

and we subscribe to them for the substance of their doctrine.

What Creeds Have Grown Out of Congregationalism? The early Congregational churches generally accepted the Savoy Confession, using it, however, with considerable latitude. The first notable attempt on this continent to formulate a confession for use in the Congregational churches was the Cambridge Platform of 1648. This was a confession both of faith and polity. The first Confession of Faith that received any general acceptance among Congregationalists in the latter half of the nineteenth century was the Burial Hill Declaration of Faith, presented to the Boston National Council of 1865 on the occasion of its visit to Plymouth. This was accepted as a fitting presentation of the sentiments of the time and place and of the broad principles of the Congregational denomination. It was considered too rhetorical, however, for use as a Confession of Faith and its reference to ancient creeds was both too indefinite and too sweeping to meet with universal approval.

The National Council of 1880 appointed a committee of seven to select twenty-five commissioners, representing different shades of thought and different sections of the country, to prepare a Confession of Faith. This Commission was instructed to report not to the Council but direct to the churches, their report "to carry such weight of authority as the character of the Commission and the intrinsic merit of their expositions of truth may command."

The result of their deliberations was published December 19, 1883, twenty-two out of twenty-five of the commissioners signing the report. The creed of 1883 proved very useful as a declaration of the things most surely believed among us.

The full text of these and other notable confessions of faith may be found in "Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism," by Professor Williston Walker, D. D.

Objections having been made in many quarters to the Creed of 1883, a more simple creed appeared to be desirable.

A brief Confession of Faith came into existence in an unlooked-for way. At a time when it was proposed to effect organic union between Congregationalists, Methodist Protestants, and the United Brethren, the representatives of those denominations met in Dayton, Ohio, and on February 9, 1906, adopted a simple Confession of Faith. This Confession met with favor in many quarters and has been adopted by a number of churches.

The Commission of Nineteen on Polity, which reported to the National Council at Kansas City in 1913, placed in the preamble of the Constitution of the National Council a brief confession of faith of less than two hundred words which has found favor in different quarters, and may possibly be used somewhat more widely than for the specific purpose for which it was written.

As modified in its opening and closing sentences for use in a local church, it is found in the Congregational Manual, pp. 229-230.

Does the Preamble Agree with the Creed? It has been charged that there exists an inconsistency between the preamble of the creed of the National Council and the creed itself. The creed is modern in its phraseology and forms of thought, while the preamble declares the loyalty of the council and of the churches composing it to the faith which from age to age has been expressed in other creeds.

There is no inconsistency here, nor any juggling with words. The faith which is confessed is the faith which the creeds have contained; the Council did not confess its own faith in terms of those creeds. The creeds have been good, bad and indifferent, and there is not one of them by which either the National Council or the churches would consent to be bound. From the so-called Apostles' Creed, which the apostles did not make, and the so-called Nicene Creed, which the Nicene Council did not make, and the so-called Athanasian Creed, which Athanasius did not make, down through all the centuries, creeds have been adopted or have come into use without adoption, bearing in their phrase-

ology the unmistakable evidence of human judgment, human devotion and human error. There never yet has been a creed that was good enough for its own age; much less has there ever been one that was adequate to express the faith of a subsequent age.

But as there is a Law which is greater than the sum of all particular laws, and which would remain, not indeed unimpaired, but still incontestably valid, if all statutes and particular enactments were repealed one by one till none remained, so there is a credal faith that is greater than any particular creed, or than all creeds together. If all creeds were to pass away that faith might suffer through the implications of their repeal or neglect, but the faith which was before the creeds would not of necessity die with the creeds, though something of it is expressed in every creed.

This is the faith confessed in the preamble of the Constitution of the National Council. It binds neither the Council nor any of the churches to the *ipsissima verba* of any creed; but it declares that through all the Christian ages there has existed a vital faith which heroes and martyrs have spoken out, and have spoken unitedly in terms of the creeds of their own generation.

To that faith the National Council and the churches profess allegiance. But as for the creeds in which that faith was expressed, they have so much weight and force as there is weight and force in the reason of them.

This is an entirely consistent attitude toward the faith of the present, the past and the future. Not only so, but it is the historic Congregational attitude toward that fundamental faith which expresses itself through creeds and outlasts all creeds. They do err, not knowing the history of the Congregational churches, nor the spirit of the Congregational movement, who see an inconsistency between the adoption of a new creed and a confession of steadfast loyalty to the faith which from age to age has expressed itself in other creeds.

However well a small company of men may intend who

would lay hold on the language of the preamble to bind the faith of the present to the obsolete forms of expression in the creeds of the past, their contention is thoroughly illogical, and is opposed to the whole genius of Congregationalism.

All creeds are ours, the Creed of 1883, the Burial Hill Confession, the Confessions of 1648 and 1680, the Nicene Creed, the Apostles' Creed, and Paul, and Cephas, and Apollos, and life and death, and things present and things to come.

Nor does any church exceed its rights in adopting the Kansas City Creed without the preamble. If every church in America but one were to adopt the new creed and preamble together, and that one remaining church should prefer to adopt the same confession without the preamble, it would have an entire right to do so, and there is no power on earth, civil or ecclesiastical, that would have the right to call it to account or charge it with having exceeded its rights or departed from the Congregational faith.

The National Council saw fit to express its faith in a new and brief confession, and at the same time to declare that the faith it was now confessing was the essential faith which had been variously expressed in former ages. The confession and the preamble are consistent, and for the purpose of their adoption by the National Council are desirable. The suggestion that no church has a right to adopt the one without the other is preposterous. The fathers whose faith some men misguidedly seek to honor through such an enchainment of the living to the dead would rise from their graves and rebuke us. It was their solemn charge to us to go forward as they went forward, being persuaded that God had yet very much light and truth to break from his Word.

The position of the National Council with reference to its own recent declaration of faith, and at the same time to historic creeds, is not changed in any essential particular from the attitude which it took toward creeds in the be-

ginning. Although the official call of the first National Council at Oberlin contained a specific provision that the Burial Hill Confession should be the doctrinal basis of the Council, the Council itself deleted that provision from the proposed draft of its constitution. As to the extent to which the Council committed itself to declarations "sufficiently set forth by former General Councils," the statement of Dr. Quint, which also represented the view of the Moderator, Dr. Buddington, may be regarded as decisive. There were those who affirmed that by this statement the old confessions were repudiated, inasmuch as the Council had definitely refused to accept the Plymouth Declaration, with its reference to the Confessions of 1648 and 1680. There were others who said that both these and all other creeds had been reaffirmed at Oberlin. Dr. Quint in an able article in The Congregational Quarterly for January, 1872, refuted both these extreme and untenable views. He said:

> It implies a reaffirmation of what has been "set forth by former General Councils" so far as they declare the common evangelical doctrines. It is really a declaration of adherence to the historic faith of the Church of Christ as being a sufficient basis of denominational unity. This does not alter the faith of any church. Every one will hold the evangelical doctrines to its own preferred cast. It does not mean a compromise, which is to omit everything to which any individual Christian objects. Variations from the well known common faith of the Christian church are left to their own adherents. This is a broad catholic basis. We do not bind ourselves by any provincial creeds or teachers. Instead of throwing away the substance of any confession, we really recognize the essential faith of the Christian Church which is in all confessions.—Congregational Quarterly, Vol. XIV., pp. 70, 71.

Dr. Quint further affirmed that what the Council was undertaking to do was not to provide "an exhaustive statement," but to define "a basis of union."

This is precisely what the Council did at Kansas City. It incorporated into its Constitution a brief yet sufficient statement of the great central truths which the Congregational churches assume as the basis of their organization in National Council; and furthermore, the Council declared that the faith which this short creed reiterates has been declared "from age to age" throughout the history of the

Christian Church. The two affirmatives are thoroughly consistent. They declare the steadfast allegiance of our churches to that essential faith which is in all creeds, but neither in 1871 nor in 1913 did the Council bind itself to any ancient creed. We stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

Is a Creed Essential to a Congregational Church? A creed is not essential to a Congregational church. When a creed exists, it should be interpreted with very great liberality as indicating in the most general terms the spirit in which the members of that church interpret the Word of God, but that Word itself illumined by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the members is the final authority. A creed may be very useful as a testimony, but not as a test.

Congregational Creeds. It is customary for a Congregational church to adopt a creed, as an expression of the beliefs in which its members agree and as the basis of their common life. They may adopt some form of sound words prepared by others, or they may phrase a creed for themselves. There is no Congregational creed prepared or adopted by a general council which all churches in the fellowship must adopt. In the early days that generally assented to was the Westminster Confession as modified in the Savoy Confession (1658, adopted at Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1680), containing what seemed to be a comprehensive and fitting expression of their faith. Few Congregational churches, if any, retain that ancient symbol, and fewer still would be willing to adopt it now. It is properly regarded as an ancient battle-flag, under which, in their day, the fathers lived and fought valiantly, and which the sons should reverently place among the trophies of the past. It is the flag to which we should most of us have rallied in its time. It does not represent the issues of today. The Burial Hill Declaration of Faith was adopted by the National Council in 1865, and is to be regarded as an expression of the belief of those who constituted the noble body of men who listened to it in its final form on ground made sacred by the early Pilgrims, and of such churches as have adopted it as their own. The Council of 1883 appointed a large commission of leading men of the denomination to formulate and issue a statement of doctrine on which they could agree; but the Council and its successors were careful not to give it the sanction of a vote, only in advance authorizing the committee to present in print to the churches the result of their deliberation when it should be reached.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, pp. 52, 53.

Early Confessions and Creeds. (1) In the year 1596 there appeared a small quarto, of twenty-two pages, entitled "A True Confession of the Faith and Humble Acknowledgment of the Allegiance which we Her Majesty's Subjects, falsely called Brown-

ists, do hold towards God, and yield to Her Majesty and all other that are over us in the Lord. Set down in Articles or Positions for the better and more easy understanding of those that shall read it: And published for the clearing of ourselves from those unchristian slanders of heresy, schism, pride, obstinacy, disloyalty, sedition, etc., which by our adversaries are in all places given out against us," etc.

Four years before this Confession was issued, a Congregational church in London which had for some time been meeting for worship and fellowship completed its organisation by electing a pastor, teacher, elders, and deacons. The fierce persecution of the Separatists in England soon drove a large part of the church to Amsterdam; the pastor, Francis Johnson, was imprisoned in the Clink. The exiles in Holland and their brethren whom they had left in London thought it necessary to issue a formal Declaration of their doctrinal faith and of their principles in relation to church government. It was a Confession of Faith issued in self-defence to repel slander and to correct misapprehension.

(2) On September the 29th, 1658, rather more than three weeks after the death of Cromwell, about two hundred delegates from 120 Congregational churches met in London and appointed Goodwin, Owen, Nye, Bridge, Caryl, and Greenhill a committee to draw up a set of Articles defining the doctrinal faith of the English Congregational churches and their principles of church polity. The result of their deliberations is given in "A Declaration of the Faith and Order owned and practised in the Congregational Churches in England: Agreed upon and consented unto by their Elders and Messengers in their Meeting at the Savoy, October the 12th, 1658."

This, too, was a Confession, not a Creed. Congregationalists of that age were clear in their judgment that the imposition of a Creed as a condition of communion is illegitimate; they were equally clear that Christian men and Christian churches are at liberty to declare their own Faith.

The following extract from the Preface to the "Declaration" will indicate their position on these questions:

"Confessions when made by a company of professors of Christianity jointly meeting to that end—the most genuine and natural use of such is, that under the same form of words they express the substance of the same common salvation, or unity of their Faith, whereby speaking the same things they show themselves 'perfectly joined in the same mind and in the same judgment.' And accordingly such a transaction is to be looked upon but as a meet or fit medium or means whereby to express their common 'Faith and Salvation'; and no way to be made use of as an imposition upon any. Whatever is of force or constraint in matters of this nature causeth them to degenerate from the name and nature of Confessions; and turns them, from being Confessions of Faith, into exactions and impositions of Faith."—*Dale:* Handbook, pp. 183-184.

Is Rejection of the Creed a Ground for Expulsion? No church has a moral right to exclude a member on account of his having come to doubt some article in its creed. If

he accepts Jesus as Saviour and Lord and is living a faithful life, he belongs in the membership of the church, and no church has a right to call anything unclean that God has cleansed.

Doctrinal Errors Not Ground for Expulsion. It is equally inconsistent with Congregational principles for a particular church to make the rejection of any theological definitions contained in a creed the ground for removing a member from Communion.

Doctrinal errors not inconsistent with a genuine faith in Christ may be long retained by men who have received remission of sins and the gift of eternal life; large provinces of glorious truth may remain unknown to them; but error and ignorance which do not separate a man from Christ should not separate him from the church.—*Dale:* Cong. Manual, p. 187.

Independence of Opinion. It is interesting to observe that these Christian men, who established these churches, were so absolutely free to approach God as they chose that they declined the difficult business of defining their faith. John Winthrop and Thomas Dudley could not have agreed on any theological platform any more than John Bright and Pius IX could have agreed. And, if any effort were made in those years to draw up any statement of Christian doctrine by any one of the ten or twelve churches of Massachusetts, it left no record behind it. Wholly conscious of such independence of opinion in the individual, these separate congregations organized themselves by making "covenants," which are wholly different from creeds.—*Edward Everett Hale:* Unitarianism and Original Congregationalism, p. 4.

The Woburn Covenant. We that do assemble ourselves this day before God and his people, in an unfeigned desire to be accepted of him as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the rule of the New Testament, do acknowledge our selves to be the most unworthy of all others, that we should attain such a high grace, and the most unable of our selves to the performance of any thing that is good, abhorring our selves for all our former defilements in the worship of God, and other wayes, and resting only upon the Lord Jesus Christ for attonement, and upon the power of his grace for the guidance of our whole after course; do here in the name of Christ Jesus, as in the presence of the Lord, from the bottom of our hearts agree together through his grace to give up our selves, first unto the Lord Jesus as our only King, Priest and Prophet, wholly to be subject unto him in all things, and therewith one unto another, as in a Church-Body to walk together in all the Ordinances of the Gospel, and in all such mutual love and offices thereof, as toward one another in the Lord; and all this, both according to the present light that the Lord hath given us, as also according to all further light, which he shall be pleased at any time to reach out unto us out of the Word by the goodness of his grace, renouncing also in the same Covenant all errors and Schisms, and whatsoever by-wayes that are contrary to the blessed rules revealed in the Gospel, and in particular the inordinate love

and seeking after the things of the world.—*Johnson:* Wonder-Working Providence, p. 216.

What Is the Nature of a Church Covenant? The covenant is that agreement which constitutes the church. The church at Scrooby was organized by a covenant. We are told in Bradford's history how its members "shook off the anti-Christian yoke of bondage and as the Lord's free people joined themselves into a church estate by a covenant of the Lord, to walk in all his ways, made or to be made known unto them according to their best endeavors, the Lord assisting them."

A Congregational church may or may not have a creed. The early churches did not have creeds, but all such churches had covenants.

Covenant Constitutes the Church. Now that a company becomes a Church, by joyning in Covenant, may be made good sundry wayes; first, By plaine Texts of Scripture; as from Deut. 29: 1, 10, 11, 12, 13. "Yee stand this day all you before the Lord your God, your Captaines of your Tribes, your Elders, your Officers, with all men of Israel, ver. 10. That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, ver 12, and he may establish thee for a people unto himselfe, ver 13." So that here is plainly shewed, that here was a company, ver 10, and this company were to be established to be a people unto the Lord, that is to say, a Church, ver. 13. And this is done by the peoples entring into solemne Covenant with God, ver. 12, and therefore a company of people doe become a Church by entring into Covenant with God.—*John Davenport:* Church Government, London, 1643.

Covenants. The Pilgrim Covenant, formed at Scrooby in 1602, declares that these people, "as ye Lord's free people, joyned themselves (by a covenant of the Lord) into a church estate, in ye fellowship of ye gospell, to walk in all his wayes, made known or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavors, whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them."

The Covenant of the First Church in Salem, adopted in 1629, reads, "We covenant with the Lord and with one another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God to walk together in all His ways, according as He is pleased to reveal Himself unto us in His Blessed Word of Truth."

The Covenant of the First Church in Boston, established in 1630, is as follows: "We, whose names are hereunder written, . . . do hereby solemnly and religiously (as in his most holy presence) promise and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways according to the rule of the gospel and in all sincere conformity to his holy ordinances, and in mutual love and respect each to other, so near as God shall give us grace."

These covenants are still retained by these three churches,

though these churches, together with the majority of the Massachusetts churches founded in the seventeenth century, now acknowledge a Unitarian faith and fellowship.—Unitarian Handbook, pp. 10-11.

The Church Covenant. That which constitutes a Congregational church is its covenant, in which its members, on the basis of common convictions as to truth and duty, and some unanimity of thought and purpose as to the best way of expressing that truth and discharging that duty, agree on certain modes of action.—*Boynton:* Congregational Way, p. 52.

This form is the visible covenant, agreement, or consent, whereby they give up themselves unto the Lord, to the observing of the ordinances of Christ together in the same society, which is usually called the church covenant: For we see not otherwise how members can have church-power one over another mutually.—Cambridge Platform, iv, 3.

But how did they form churches? and how are churches now to be formed? or what is it that constitutes a number of visible saints a proper church? I answer, a mutual covenant. It is by confederation, that a number of individual Christians become a visible church of Christ. A number of professing Christians cannot be formed into a church without their freely and mutually covenanting to walk together in all the duties and ordinances of the gospel.—*Emmons:* Platform Eccl. Govt., ii, 1.

Nothing besides a covenant can give form to a church, or be a sufficient bond of union. Mere Christian affection cannot. Though all Christian churches ought to be connected by the bond of brotherly love, yet this alone is not sufficient to make a number of Christians a church of Christ. This bond of union runs through all the Christian world, and cordially unites real Christians of all denominations, though divided into various distinct societies. This common bond of union cannot be the principal bond of union in any particular church. Nor does baptism constitute a person a member of any particular church. Many of those strangers in Jerusalem, who were baptized on the day of Pentecost, probably never saw one another again after they left Jerusalem; so that their baptism could not make them members of any particular church. Thus it appears, that a number of Christians may form themselves into a proper church, or religious society, by a mutual covenant.—*Emmons:* Platform Eccl. Govt., ii, 2.

Sacredness of Covenant. The church covenant is no more with us than this—an agreement and resolution, professed with promise to walk in all those ways pertaining to this fellowship, so far as they shall be revealed to them in the gospel. Thus briefly and indefinitely and implicitly, and in such like words and no other, do we apply ourselves to men's consciences, not obtruding upon them the mention of any one particular before or in admission, . . . leaving their spirits free to the entertainment of the light that shines or shall shine on them and us out of the Word.—*Thomas Goodwin,* in Letters to John Goodwin, p. 44.

Daniel Buck, a member of the church organized in London in 1592, declared, on his arraignment before three magistrates, that when he came into the congregation "he made this protestation,

that he would walk with the rest of the congregation, so long as they would walk in the way of the Lord, and as far as might be warranted by the word of God."—*Punchard:* Hist., 277, 278.

It is enough that there be a covenant either expressed or implied.—*Burton:* Rejoinder to Prynne, p. 25.

A covenant may be "by silent consent, Gen. 17:2; by express words, Ex. 19:8; or by writing and sealing, Neh. 9:38."—*Cotton:* Way of the Churches, 3.

The church of Christ arises from the coadunition or knitting together of many saints into one by a holy covenant, whereby they, as lively stones, are built into a spiritual house, I Pet. 2:4, 5. Though church covenant be common to all churches in its general nature, yet there is a special combination which gives a peculiar being to one Congregational church and its members, distinct from all others.—*John Davenport:* Power of Congregational Churches, p. 62.

The Salem Covenant. Higginson's Confession of Faith and Covenant was acknowledged only as a direction pointing to that faith and covenant contained in the Holy Scriptures; and therefore no man was confined to that form of words, but only to the substance and scope of the matter contained therein; and, for the circumstantial manner of joining the church, it was ordered according to the wisdom and faithfulness of the elders, together with the liberty and ability of any person. Hence it was that some were admitted by expressing their consent to that written confession of faith and covenant; others did answer questions about the principles of religion, that were publicly propounded to them; some did present their confession in writing, which was read for them; and some, that were able and willing, did make their own confession, in their own words and way.—*Morton:* New England Memorial.

The Covenant a Sacrament. A Congregational church was created by the covenant. It was in reality a third sacrament.—*Vernon:* Southworth Lectures.

Every true church of God is joyned with him in holye covenant by voluntarye profession to have him the God thereof and to be his people.—*John Robinson.*

The Covenant in 1606. They joyned both hands each with each Brother, and stood in a Ringwise: their intent being declared. H. Jacob and each of the Rest made some confession or profession of their Faith and Repentance: some were longer, some were briefer. Then they covenanted together to walk in all God's Ways as he revealed or should make known to them.—Record of church founded in London by Henry Jacob, 1606.

Every true Church of God is joyned with Him in holye covenant by voluntary profession to have him the God thereof & to be his people.—From newly discovered MS. of *John Robinson,* edited by Champlin Burrage, Oxford, 1910.

XXIV. THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

Why Was There No National Council in the Beginning? There was no National Council in the beginning of American Congregationalism because there was then no nation, and also because at that time the Congregational emphasis was laid upon independence rather than fellowship. While Congregational churches always have believed in fellowship and the interchange of advice and the united action of the churches in common concerns, no fixed and unalterable form existed or was felt to be needed for the expression of that fellowship. From time to time councils, synods, and conventions were called as occasion required, but the organization of a national body, representative of all the Congregational churches, waited till the consciousness of national denominational unity called it into being.

As the National Council represents a comparatively recent development in our denominational life, it is necessary to treat some topics related to its functions with somewhat more of fullness than has been necessary in other sections of this book.

What National Congregational Gatherings Preceded the National Council? The following gatherings, representative of the Congregational churches, may fairly be described as in some sense national:

(1) *The gathering which formulated the Mayflower Compact.* Although this was a body composed of the members of a single Congregational church, it was at that time the sole Congregational church within the territory of what is now the United States. Already in 1606 the men who composed it had organized in Scrooby a free Congregational Church. They did this "as the Lord's free people," being joined in a covenant "to walk in the ways of the Lord, known or to be made known unto them, whatever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them." This covenant had proved adequate for their needs during their sojourn

in Holland, but during their voyage to America some cases of incipient insubordination, particularly among some of the later arrivals in the colony, indicated the advisability of establishing a civil government. With the same calm dignity and self-confidence which they had manifested in their organization into a church estate, they gathered in the cabin of the Mayflower in Cape Cod Harbor on November 11, 1620, and adopted the Compact, which was signed by forty-one male members of the Mayflower community.

(2) *The Newtowne Synod.* This synod was called by the General Court of Massachusetts and convened in Newtowne, now Cambridge, on August 30, 1637. It lasted for twenty-four days. It was called into existence to consider the doctrines of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson and others. It was constituted of "all the teaching elders through the country and of messengers from the churches." It considered and catalogued and condemned eighty-two erroneous opinions and nine unwholesome expressions. It pronounced what Scripture had been perverted and declared what the synod considered the true meaning of the passages in question. In view of the private gatherings of Mrs. Hutchinson, it held that gatherings of church members at or near the meeting-house could not be countenanced; that women's meetings for doctrinal discussion were not expedient, and that members who held views contrary to the discipline of the church should not receive letters of dismission.

(3) *The Cambridge Synod.* This body convened at Cambridge, Mass., September, 1646, and continued for fourteen days. It assembled again June 8, 1647, and adjourned, convening again on October 27, 1647, and held its final meeting August 15 to 25, 1648. The Cambridge Synod convened pursuant to a letter of inquiry sent by ministers in England to New England requesting the judgment of their brethren concerning "nine positions," and also to a communication to the churches of New England asking thirty-two questions covering the whole field of church government. The General Court of Massachusetts was

petitioned May, 1646, to convene the churches in a synod. The synod was convened by the General Court by the following call:

"That there be a public assembly of the elders and other messengers of the several churches, within this jurisdiction, who may come together, and meet at Cambridge, upon the first day of September, now next ensuing, then to discuss, dispute and clear up by the Word of God, such questions of church government and discipline, in the things aforementioned or any other, as they shall think needful and meet, and to continue so doing till they or the major part of them shall have agreed and consented upon one form of government and discipline, for the main and substantial parts thereof, as that which they judge agreeable to the Holy Scriptures."

It resulted in the adoption of the so-called Cambridge Platform, one of the most important documents of early American Congregationalism.

(4) *The Massachusetts Synod.* This body assembled at Boston, March 10, June 10, July 4, and September 9, 1662. It was called at the order and desire of the General Court. It was composed of seventy elders and messengers convened to answer the questions: (a) "Who are the subjects of baptism?" and (b) "Whether, according to the Word of God, there ought to be a consociation of churches, and what should be the manner of it?"

In answer to the first question, the synod recommended that persons who had been baptized in infancy and therefore members of the church, might "own the covenant," and even if they did not come into full communion, if they were not scandalous in their lives, they might be entitled to have their children baptized. This judgment, however, failed of general approval by the churches.

With respect to the second question, the synod contented itself by referring the churches to the Cambridge Platform.

(5) *The Reforming Synod.* This body assembled at

Boston, September 10, 1679. It was called by the General Court upon a motion made by "certain reverend elders." It grew out of the sad lapses in faith and life of many of the people of the second and third generations living in New England and the distresses of the times which were believed to be the result of judgments of God by reason of the people's sins. Two questions were asked: (a) "What are the evils that have provoked the Lord to bring his judgments on New England?" (b) "What is to be done so that these evils may be reformed?"

The finding of this Synod was drawn up by Increase Mather.

(6) *The Savoy Synod.* This was technically a second session of the Reforming Synod of 1679. The brethren who composed that earlier body held a second session May 12, 1680, to "consult and consider a Confession of Faith." This lay somewhat outside the scope of their original call, but their action met the general approval of the churches and also of the General Court, and they adopted with slight variations the confession which had been consented to by the churches of England at Savoy, in 1658. It was virtually the Westminster Confession, with certain changes in respect to polity.

(7) *The Saybrook Synod.* The Saybrook Synod was called by the Legislature of Connecticut and convened at Saybrook, September 9, 1708. In the call it was directed "that the ministers of the several counties should meet at the county towns, with such messengers as the churches should send, to consider and agree upon methods and rules of ecclesiastical discipline, and appoint two or more of their number to meet at Saybrook, there to draw a form of ecclesiastical discipline to be laid before the Legislature at its October session."

The literary monument of this synod is the Saybrook Platform, containing fifteen articles of discipline. Its contribution to the polity of the denomination was the establishment of the Consociation System.

(8) *The Michigan City Convention.* Less than national in its membership, but fully national in its influence, was a convention of representatives of Congregationalism held in Michigan City, Indiana, in 1846, which declared the adherence of the western churches thus represented to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel as set forth by the masters of New England theology and also to the historical polity of the Congregational churches. This convention had large influence in convincing eastern Congregationalists of the essential unity of western Congregationalism with that of New England and did much to prepare the way for the Albany Convention and later for the National Council of 1865.

(9) *The Albany Convention.* This body assembled at Albany, N. Y., October 5-8, 1852, to express the dawning consciousness of denominational unity. It abrogated the Plan of Union which had been adopted between the Connecticut Missionary Society and the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1801, and pledged $62,000 for the propaganda of Congregationalism west of the Hudson.

(10) *The Boston Council of* 1865. Chicago Theological Seminary is governed by a triennial convention of the Congregational churches of the Northwest. At its meeting in Chicago, April, 1864, it adopted resolutions to the effect that the Congregational churches of the United States should consult together concerning their common duties and opportunities. The General Association of Illinois, convening at Quincy, May 27, 1864, approved the resolutions and voted that a National Convention of Congregationalists be invited to assemble either at Springfield, Mass., or Albany, N. Y., on Tuesday, September 6, 1864. The Congregational Conference of Ohio approved the plan and invited the convention to meet at Cleveland. A meeting of the delegates of the American Congregational Union assembled at New Haven, in July, 1864, and suggested that that body invite the committees from the several states to meet in Broadway Tabernacle, November 16, 1864. Accordingly

the committees met. Fifteen states were represented; forty delegates and fourteen honorary members were present.

At this Conference of Committees it was voted that the body convene in Boston on the second Wednesday in June, 1865; that the selection of members be by the churches in the local conferences, one pastor and one delegate, or two delegates for each ten churches or major fraction thereof; each Conference or Association to be allowed at least one pastor and one delegate.

The Council assembled in the Old South Meeting House on July 14, 1865, at 3 o'clock P. M. It gave expression to the new sense of unity which the churches felt after the Civil War and it adopted the Burial Hill Confession. It was an important step toward the organization of the National Council itself.

(11) *The Pilgrim Memorial Convention.* The Church of the Pilgrimage at Plymouth, Mass., invited the churches to meet all delegates in New York to consider the appropriateness of celebrating the 250th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims. That meeting was held March 2, 1870, and appointed a general committee to prepare for such a celebration. Among the acts of this committee was the calling of the Pilgrim Memorial Convention, which met at Chicago, April 27, 1870, and was open to delegates from all the churches in the United States. The convention included the entire membership of the Triennial Convention of the Northwest which had met on the day previous. The most significant utterance of this convention was the adoption of the following resolution:

"Resolved, That this Pilgrim Memorial Convention recommend to the Congregational state conferences and associations and the other local bodies to unite in measures for instituting any principle of fellowship, excluding ecclesiastical authority as a permanent national authority."

How Did the National Council Originate? The National Council grew directly out of the action of the Pilgrim Memorial Convention held in Chicago, April 27, 1870. The

underlying conditions, which made such a council appropriate, were set forth by a committee, of which Rev. A. H. Quint was chairman, summarizing the findings of the several associations looking toward a national gathering:

When the Congregational churches were confined almost wholly to New England, the facility of intercourse insured a unity which needed no more formal expression than the correspondence of state bodies with each other by delegates. Hence, it was held that no organization broader than that of a single state was necessary, except when some exigency should arise, such as those which prompted the calling of the Albany Convention of 1852, and the Council at Boston of 1865. But the rapid extension of the Congregational connection from the Hudson River to the Pacific Ocean, has made the want of some common assembly severely felt; and the great and pressing duties of evangelization have made the exigencies continual. The staunchest advocates of the rights of the churches have come to feel that some visible expression of unity is greatly needed, as well as some method of securing common consultation upon the duties of the churches in their united character; and that both of these objects can be perfectly secured without interfering, in the least degree, with those principles of local self-government which are dear to this part of Christ's visible church.

A number of State Associations having taken favorable action and having appointed committees to join in the call of a National Council, a convention of committees was held in the Congregational Library in Boston, December 21, 1870. It was called to order by Dr. Quint, and Rev. Edwin B. Webb was elected chairman. The convention continued in session on that day and the day following and adopted the following resolutions:

Resolved, 1. That it is expedient, and appears clearly to be the voice of the churches, that a National Council of the Congregational churches of the United States be organized.

Resolved, 2. That the churches are hereby invited to meet in council, by delegates, to form such an organization, and constitute its first session at a place and time to be settled by a committee hereafter to be appointed, who shall have public notice thereof; and that delegates be appointed in number and manner as follows: (1) That the churches assembled in their local conferences appoint one delegate for every ten churches in their respective organizations, and one for a fraction of ten greater than one-half; it being understood that wherever the churches of any state are directly united in a General Association or Conference, they may, at their option, appoint the delegate in the above ratio in General Conference, instead of in local conferences. (2) That in addition to the above, the churches united in any General Association or Confer-

ence, appoint by such Association, one delegate, and one for each ten thousand communicants in their fellowship, and one for a major fraction thereof. (3) That the number of delegates be, in all cases, divided between ministers and laymen, as nearly equally as is possible.

Resolved, 3. That a committee, consisting of seven persons, be appointed to prepare the draft of a proposed constitution for the National Council, to be submitted for consideration at the meeting now called, and to be previously published in season for consideration by the churches, and that that committee be governed by the following directions:

(1) That the name be as above.

(2) That reference be made to the Declaration of Faith set forth at Plymouth, in the year 1865, as the doctrinal basis.

(3) That a declaration be made of the two cardinal principles of Congregationalism, viz., the exclusive right and power of the individual churches to self-government; and the fellowship of the churches one with another, with the duties growing out of that fellowship and especially the duty of general consultation in all matters of common concern to the whole body of churches.

(4) That the churches withhold from the National Council all legislative or judicial power over churches or individuals, and all right to act as a council of reference.

(5) That the objects of the organization be set forth substantially as follows:

To express and foster the substantial unity of our churches in doctrine, polity, and work.

To consult upon the common interests of all our churches, their duties in the work of evangelization, the united development of their resources, and their relations to all parts of the kingdom of Christ.

(6) That the number and manner of electing delegates be as now adopted in calling the first meeting.

(7) That the session be held once in ..... years.

(8) To provide as simple an organization, with as few officers, and with as limited duties as may be consistent with the efficiency of the Council in advancing the principles and securing the objects of the proposed organization.

Resolved, 4. That the churches throughout the country be notified of the action of this convention, and be requested to authorize their representatives in Conferences to choose delegates as above.

A committee of seven was chosen to prepare a draft of the proposed constitution and directed to determine the place and time of the first meeting of the Council and to issue the call. In accordance with this vote the first National Council, calling itself by that name and meeting under a constitution providing for recurring sessions, was held at Oberlin, Ohio, in 1871.

What Was the Difference Between the National Council

and Previous Synods? The fundamental difference between the National Council and the national gatherings which had preceded it is in the fact that the National Council, as now organized, is a body which meets regularly under a constitution of its own, with a considerable number of committees and commissions carrying on a continuous work on behalf of the churches of the denomination. All other differences grow out of these. The churches have come to look to it inevitably as possessed of more stability and direct representative character than they recognized in *pro re nata* councils called at long intervals.

When Did the National Council Begin to Enlarge Its Powers? Strictly speaking, the National Council has never possessed or assumed any power beyond such reason as may have appeared in its several acts. Some recommendations of the Council have been very frankly disregarded by the churches and by the Council itself. Others have from the beginning had almost the force of law because they appeared to register the judgment of the churches in matters where such expression appeared to have been appropriate. At no time has the Council understood itself to be making any radical departure from the principles upon which it was founded. Looking back upon the history of the organization, however, it is rather plain to the historian that the Council of 1886 was that which stood at the parting of the ways. Up to that time the several meetings of the Council had been marked by the rather timid advice which they gave in very guarded fashion to the churches. While the Council of 1880 provided for the preparation of a creed, it took pains that the Council itself should not adopt it, but merely that the Commission should give it direct to the churches.

The Council of 1886, however, was the beginning of the new order of things. Therein Rev. A. H. Quint, of Massachusetts, and Rev. A. Hastings Ross, of Michigan, stood for a representative body in each state to which the ministers of that state should be directly responsible. Rev.

Henry M. Dexter opposed these brethren with all the eloquence and ardor which had expressed themselves in his great books on Congregational usage. The vote, however, was decisive. The National Council of 1886 made membership in a Congregational Association essential to good and regular standing in the Congregational ministry. From this time on very nearly everything that Dr. Dexter had written about Associations became obsolete, and very much that had been declared concerning the National Council ceased to be strictly true. Since that time the National Council has virtually been a council of reference on various important matters representing our common denominational concern.

Need of Denominational Leadership. I certainly believe that the best interests of all our churches individually and collectively would be promoted by having in some form recognized leaders who should look after the interests of the denomination as a whole, so that the growth of the denomination should not be limited to the extraneous natural accretion of new material to the bodies already existing, but should follow the law of development of nations and religions alike, by expansion, concert of action, and unity of purpose.—*Pres. Cyrus Northrup*, at National Council of 1907.

At the outset of our history there was necessarily some negative element of protest in the principles of Congregationalism, but they speedily took positive form and became the constructive force in an order of organized life as definite and homogeneous as was compatible with the wide liberty which lay at its foundation. We have long been agreed that these principles are primarily two, the sufficiency of the local church and the obligations of fellowship. Around these the ideals and the deeds of Congregationalism so far as it constitutes an organic force have centered. After a three hundred years' test these principles command our allegiance today as completely as they did that of our fathers. It is true that there are occasionally found among us, as among them, those who look longingly toward Episcopacy or Presbyterianism. But with these few exceptions we not only believe in the validity of those old-time affirmations, but also realize their significance for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God in a degree impossible to those who stood at the beginning of these three centuries of history. We know what they mean for freedom of thought. We know how they have unshackled the ministry. We know how they have made for individual initiative. We know how they have wrought for Christian unity. We know their potency to unmask pretentious shams. We know that they have taught men to rely not upon external forms and forces but upon the hidden life of the Spirit. In other words we see in Congregationalism a polity whose justification lies solely in its spiritual power.—*Herring:* Report of Secy. National Council, New Haven, Oct., 1915.

Democracy a Spiritual Solidarity. The Congregational system or ideal is not a mere theory of Church politics or government, but fundamentally a doctrine of religion, a way of apprehending and realizing the Christian faith. Its ecclesiastical polity is but its doctrine applied to the exercise and cultivation of the religious life. Catholicism is a splendid system, even without the religious idea that fills it; but Independency, apart from its religious basis and ideal, is at once mean and impotent, impracticable and visionary. Our fathers held that legislation, civil or ecclesiastical, could not create a church; conversion and converted men alone could. All were kings and priests unto God, and could exercise their functions only as they stood in open and immediate relation with Him. In His Church Christ did not reign, while officials governed; He both governed and reigned.

This Council speaks of an independency that is ceasing to be an isolation and learning to become a brotherhood. There is nothing that has so little solidarity as an autocracy. It may secure cohesion, but cannot realize unity; its weapons are the mechanical forces and clamps that may aggregate and hold together atoms; they do not represent those vital principles and laws which can build up a living and productive and complete organism. —*A. M. Fairbairn*, at First International Council, London, 1891.

How Many National Councils Have Been Held? The list of National Councils as thus far held or arranged for is as follows: 1871, Oberlin, Ohio; 1874, New Haven, Conn.; 1877, Detroit, Mich.; 1880, St. Louis, Mo.; 1883, Concord, N. H.; 1886, Chicago, Ill.; 1889, Worcester, Mass.; 1892, Minneapolis, Minn.; 1895, Syracuse, N. Y.; 1898, Portland, Ore.; 1901, Portland, Me.; 1904, Des Moines, Iowa; 1907, Cleveland, Ohio; 1910, Boston, Mass.; 1913, Kansas City, Mo.; 1915, New Haven, Conn.; 1917, Los Angeles, Cal. The Council of 1919 will be in an important sense a preparation for the fourth International Council, which will commemorate the Tercentenary of the Landing of the Pilgrims, and will be held at Boston and Plymouth in 1920.

Has the National Council Any Definite Doctrinal Platform? The answer to this question is less easy than at first it might seem. On the one hand is the fact of its own constant disclaimer of any right to impose a creed on any church. On the other is the fact that it has given to the churches three creeds, the Burial Hill Confession, the Creed of 1883, and the Declaration which forms a portion of the

preamble of the constitution adopted at Kansas City in 1913.

The Burial Hill Confession was not adopted as a national Congregational Creed, but as a sort of fitting climax to the Boston Council of 1865 on the occasion of its visit to Plymouth. "Standing by the rock where the Pilgrims set foot upon these shores, upon the spot where they worshiped God, and among the graves of the former generations," it seemed appropriate that the Congregational Council should say that it held to the essential truths for which the Pilgrims lived and died. They did not intend that they should thereby impose a creed upon the churches.

Still, this is what came somewhat near to being done. When the Convention of Committees of the several states met in Boston, on Forefathers' day in 1870, "to form a National Congregational Council," it adopted eight resolutions, outlining the plan of the Council essentially as it later was organized, and sent them out to the churches. It was on the basis of these eight resolutions that the churches elected their delegates through the district and state bodies in 1871. The first of these eight resolutions named the unborn child, "The National Council of Congregational Churches of the United States." The second resolution was this:

> That reference be made to the Declaration of Faith set forth at Plymouth in the year 1865, as the doctrinal basis.

Acting under this instruction, the committee appointed to present a constitution proposed the following at Oberlin in 1871:

> They (the churches) agree in belief that the Holy Scriptures are the sufficient and only rule of faith and practice: their understanding of the doctrines thereof, and their harmony with other parts of the Church universal, being sufficiently expressed in the Declaration of Faith set forth in the National Council in the year 1865.

The second part of this resolution was warmly debated. Two objections were raised against it. One was that it did not sufficiently emphasize church unity. The other was

that it committed the churches to a creed. The creed of 1865 was itself criticized as offering an inadequate basis. It was held that it was not familiar; that it was not intended for any such purpose; and that it referred its reader back some hundreds of years to two other creeds. The friends of church unity got in an amendment proposing to insert after the words "the year 1865" the words "as follows" and to add a quotation from the Burial Hill Confession on church unity. Dr. Quint, chairman both of the committee which had prepared the Burial Hill Confession and that which at this time was offering the new constitution, objected to quoting one part of the confession and not the rest.

A multitude of amendments were offered or ready to be offered when the session took recess. When the Council reassembled, Dr. Quint moved that the doctrinal question be referred to a special committee, of which Professor Bartlett of Chicago Seminary was chairman.

This was done, and this committee recast the section as follows:

> They agree in belief that the Holy Scriptures are the sufficient and only infallible rule of religious faith and practice; their interpretation thereof being in substantial accordance with the great doctrines of the Christian faith commonly called "evangelical," held in our churches from early times, and sufficiently set forth by former general Councils.

This was unanimously adopted. Of "former general Councils" that of 1865 was latest and best remembered, and its declaration was sufficiently in mind to make this elastic reference a satisfactory allusion to it without committing the Council to it in any formal manner.

There was immediate disagreement after adjournment of the Council as to how far the churches were committed by this declaration. Dr. Bartlett, in an able article, held that the word "in accordance with" meant "conformed to, molded and governed by the evangelical doctrines." Dr. Quint and the moderator, Dr. Buddington, opposed this interpretation.

> This article does not attempt to define the faith of the churches, but the basis of union in the National Council. This does not

alter the faith of any church. Every one will hold the evangelical doctrines in his own preferred cast. We do not bind ourselves by any provincial creeds or teachers.—*Quint:* Congregational Quarterly, 1872, pp. 70-71.

This, then, would appear true concerning the National Council as first organized:

(1) It came together with the express understanding that the Committee on Constitution had been instructed to make the Burial Hill Confession the doctrinal basis of the Council.

(2) The Constitution as adopted was intended not to bind any church or member to any creed, but did intend that there should be union on the basis of the evangelical doctrines, liberally interpreted, the definite reference to the Burial Hill declaration having given place to an allusion to the creeds "sufficiently set forth by former general Councils."

One other strong influence must be borne in mind in interpreting this action. The feeling at Oberlin in 1871 was very strong in favor of church union. There were those who feared that the organization of the National Congregational Council would remove us farther from union with other bodies. To avoid this, the Council adopted a long "Declaration of Unity," which until 1913 was printed between the Constitution and By-laws in all editions of the Constitution issued by authority of the National Council.

This "Declaration of Unity" contains the words "We believe in the Holy Catholic Church"; and in the discussions it was referred to as a declaration of faith. It is interesting that in the six paragraphs of this declaration the only one in credal form, the only real credal affirmation of the Council, is one which declares the belief of the Council in the Holy Catholic Church.

The Commission's Creed of 1883 was a much more carefully considered document than the Burial Hill Confession, and much better proportioned and more widely influential. It was prepared by a Commission of Twenty-five of the National Council, and while never formally adopted

by the Council, had the moral weight of its influence as an expression of the spirit in which the Congregational churches of that day interpreted the Word of God. No attempt was ever made to include in the Constitution of the Council any reference to it as the doctrinal basis of the Council.

The Commission of Nineteen on Polity, in preparing a new constitution to be presented to the Council in 1913, had very definitely in mind the various complications in the situation, and carefully considered the strong expressions which came to them from many sources as to a platform for the Council. These expressions represented a wide variety of views, from those who opposed any kind of doctrinal reference to those who desired a definite creed. At least three different creeds were urged upon the Commission through its Committee on Constitution—The Burial Hill Confession, the Creed of 1883, and the Dayton Confession of 1906.

The Commission did not consider it any part of its duty to prepare a creed for the denomination or for any of its churches. It did consider, however, that the Constitution ought to contain some doctrinal statement as a declaration of our basis of unity in the National Council; and this was the general sentiment in the letters that reached the Committee on Constitution.

The Commission sought to preserve historic continuity without any bondage of conscience, and to emphasize, as we have ever done, our faith in Christian unity while declaring basic principles of our denominational organization. To this end it adopted a simple platform with an opening paragraph or preamble, and a paragraph each on doctrine, polity, and unity.

The Confession of Faith which the Commission of Nineteen first sent out was the following simple declaration:

> This Council, and the churches composing it, believing in the love of God the Father toward all men, and in the revelation of that love in Jesus Christ our Lord, and seeking to live together in the life, fellowship and service of the Spirit of God, are united in

striving to know their duty as taught in the Holy Scriptures and through the present ministration of the Spirit of God, in their covenant to walk in the ways of the Lord made known or to be made known to them, and in their labor for that righteousness which is profitable for the life that now is, and has promise for the life everlasting. Heartily accepting that substance of doctrine contained in the ancient symbols of the undivided Church, in the common faith which belongs to all Christians, and in the truth which has found expression in our communion in noble deeds and living words set forth by those whose faith we follow, we humbly depend, as did our fathers, on the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit of God, to lead us into all truth.

A very few critics objected to any doctrinal statement whatever. But ten times as many, and probably more, declared that the Commission should have gone farther, and without attempting an extended or rigid creed, should put in the forefront of the Constitution a simple declaration of faith, beginning, not with an assumption, but a declaration, and changing the participial clause with which the Commission had deliberately begun its statement to a positive utterance of faith.

From many quarters, also, came the plea for a statement which might be used for other purposes as individual churches and church members should find occasion. And it was urged that the statement be more definitely christological. The Chicago Ministers' Union made this request in formal resolution and it was echoed in scores of places.

Acting under this widespread request, the Commission prepared the short declaration of faith which is found in the preamble of the new Constitution.

The Congregational Churches of the United States, by delegates in National Council assembled, reserving all the rights and cherished memories belonging to this organization under its former Constitution, and declaring the steadfast allegiance of the churches composing the Council to the faith which our fathers confessed, which from age to age has found its expression in the historic creeds of the Church universal and of this Communion, and affirming our loyalty to the basic principles of our representative democracy, hereby set forth the things most surely believed among us concerning faith, polity and fellowship:

FAITH

We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, goodness, and love; and in Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord and Saviour, who for us and our salvation lived and died, and rose again and liveth

evermore; and in the Holy Spirit, who taketh of the things of Christ and revealeth them to us, renewing, comforting, and inspiring the souls of men. We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the gospel to all mankind, exalting the worship of the one true God, and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of human brotherhood. Depending, as did our fathers, upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God; and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting.

POLITY

We believe in the freedom and responsibility of the individual soul, and the right of private judgment. We hold to the autonomy of the local church and its independence of all ecclesiastical control. We cherish the fellowship of the churches, united in district, state and national bodies, for counsel and co-operation in matters of common concern.

THE WIDER FELLOWSHIP

While affirming the liberty of our churches, and the validity of our ministry, we hold to the unity and catholicity of the Church of Christ, and will unite with all its branches in hearty co-operation; and will earnestly seek, so far as in us lies, that the prayer of our Lord for his disciples may be answered, that they all may be one.

Who Creates the National Council? Although the delegates to the National Council are elected by District Associations and State Conferences, they are constituted by the churches. Both the old and the new Constitutions of the National Council definitely affirm this principle.

The Churches Constitute the Council. The Congregational churches of the United States, not their Associations and Conferences, are the constituent members as saith its constitution. The delegates to the meetings of the Council, elected in the local and state bodies, are representatives of the churches which directly compose those bodies and the Council. Thus our highest administrative agency is but one step removed from the churches themselves.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, p. 132.

Do Delegates Represent Associations? Delegates to the National Council represent the churches. For convenience they are elected in part by District Associations and in part by State Conferences, but the Constitution definitely and with purpose states that "the churches in each District

Association" and "the churches in each State Conference shall be represented" by the delegates which the churches elect through these representative bodies.

Must Members of the National Council Reside Within the District Which Elects Them? The Constitution of the National Council provides in Article 3, Section 1, paragraph D, that a delegate who removes from the bounds of the Conference or Association by which he has been elected, shall be deemed by the fact of that removal to have resigned his membership in the Council, and the Conference or Association may proceed to fill the unexpired term by election. If the question be asked, Could the Conference or Association elect him again after he removed? the answer is that it probably would not do that, but that it could not be prevented if it chose. The District Association has sometimes been represented by delegates residing in the state but outside the bounds of the Association. This has usually been because the Association found it impossible to be represented by one of its own resident members. It is desirable that delegates should reside in the district which elects them, but if an Association or Conference elects a delegate deliberately with the knowledge that he is not a resident, the National Council cannot exclude him from membership.

The Council in 1915 voted that a delegate who at the time of his election lives outside the district or state electing him may nevertheless be seated as a delegate.

How Are Vacancies Filled? Each state or district organization which elects delegates to the National Council may provide in its own way for the filling of vacancies, but the Constitution provides that in the absence of any special rule on the part of such state or district body, the Council will recognize the right of the delegates present to fill vacancies in their own delegation.

May an Alternate Be Displaced? If a primary delegate does not appear and his alternate is seated in his stead, the properly accredited alternate or substitute succeeds the pri-

mary delegate for his entire term and the primary becomes the alternate. This membership holds good also in the several societies. An alternate or substitute enrolled as a member of the Council and certified to the societies for membership therein, shall be thereafter deemed a member instead of the primary delegate for the term for which that delegate was elected.

May There Be Temporary Alternates? A new by-law adopted by the National Council at New Haven in 1915, wisely provided an arrangement whereby the absence of a delegate from one or more sessions of a meeting of the National Council shall not deprive him of his seat or lessen the representation of the body electing him if a duly accredited alternate from the body which elected him is available for substitution in his stead. Under this new ruling if a delegate is unable to be present at the opening of a meeting of the Council, he can nevertheless be enrolled and his seat can be taken by his alternate until the time of the arrival of the primary. If the primary is called away before the end of a meeting, his alternate may be enrolled in his stead for the remaining sessions of the meeting. This is a matter of special importance in its effect upon the standing of four-year delegates. Under the operation of this plan, a four-year delegate who is compelled to leave the first meeting of the Council of which his election constitutes him a member, and in whose place an alternate is seated for the remaining sessions of that meeting, does not lose his place as a delegate to the Council at its meeting two years later.

The question whether in such substitution a particular alternate must act for a particular delegate, is one which the Council does not itself decide. The Association or Conference electing delegates and alternates is entitled to determine in what order they are to become eligible for service. But unless the electing body by vote determines a plan of limitation, the delegate is at liberty to deputize any alter-

nate who has been accredited as such by the body by which he himself has been elected.

By-Law XVIII. A duly enrolled delegate may deputize any alternate duly appointed by the body appointing the delegate, to act for him, at any session of the Council by special designation applicable to the session in question.

If no Delegate Appears Is Representation Lost? If neither the primary nor his substitute appears at the first meeting after his election, the members having been elected for a period of four years, the election holds valid for the second biennial and any specially called Councils. A delegate who cannot attend the first meeting and is unable to provide a substitute, may and should file his credentials, and thereby become a member of the Council entitled to vote at the intervening annual meeting of the several missionary societies.

(1) Membership in the Council shall entitle one to voting membership in the several benevolent societies only when the certificate of election as delegate is approved by the Committee on Credentials of the National Council.

(2) In the absence of a delegate from the first stated meeting of the Council after his election, the properly accredited substitute, being duly enrolled and present, succeeds the primary delegate for the entire unexpired term.

(3) If any delegate cannot be present at the first meeting of the Council after his election, he may send his certificate of election to the Committee on Credentials, and if his place is not filled by a substitute, properly enrolled, the primary delegate shall be enrolled as a member, in absentia, such enrollment being equivalent to attendance as evidence of membership.

(4) The substitute for the primary delegate shall have the same privilege of presenting his credentials, in absentia, accorded to the delegate; and if said primary delegate shall not be enrolled, and the credentials are approved, the name of the substitute shall be inserted in the roll as having qualified as a member of the Council. —Resolutions National Council, 1913.

What Is the Purpose of the National Council? The purpose of the National Council is stated in the second article of its Constitution:

The purpose of the National Council is to foster and express the substantial unity of the Congregational churches in faith, polity, and work; to consult upon and devise measures and maintain agencies for the promotion of their common interests; to cooperate with any corporation or body under control of or affiliated

with the Congregational churches, or any of them; and to do and to promote the work of the Congregational churches of the United States in their national, international and interdenominational relations.—Art. ii.

How Is the National Council Supported? The National Council is supported by a per capita assessment on the membership of the Congregational churches, which is uniform throughout all the states. To this is added in each state the percentage necessary for the support of the state work, and the two are collected by the registrar of the State Conference through the District Association. The total varies as the expense of the state work varies. Neither the District Association nor the State Conference nor the National Council has power to enforce the collection of this assessment, and it sometimes is not collected; but in general the churches respond with reasonable promptness. The expenses of the National Council are small as compared with those of the national organizations of many denominations, as the delegates pay their own expenses. The money collected is for the maintenance of the office, the salary of the secretary and his assistants, the publication of the Year Book, and for certain authorized expenses incurred by commissions of the Council.

What Is the Corporation for the National Council? The corporation for the National Council is a legal body incorporated under the laws of Connecticut, with very large corporate powers, enabling it to do such acts and to discharge such trusts as properly belong to such a corporation, according to the constitution, rules and instructions of the National Council. It may hold real estate and accept trusts either for the Council or for any Congregational society or church, according to instructions which may from time to time be given to it by the National Council.

(5) The corporation shall receive and hold all property, real and personal, of the Council, and all property, real and personal, which may be conveyed to it in trust, or otherwise, for the benefit of Congregational churches or of any Congregational church; and acting for the Council between the meetings of the Council in all business matters not otherwise delegated or reserved, shall do

such acts and discharge such trusts as properly belong to such a corporation and are in conformity to the constitution, rules and instructions of the Council.

(6) The corporation may adopt for its government and the management of its affairs, standing by-laws and rules not inconsistent with its charter or with the constitution, by-laws and rules of the Council.

(7) The corporation shall make such reports to the Council as the Council may require.—By-Laws of the National Council, art. xii.

What Are the Functions of the National Council Moderator? The moderator of the National Council, besides presiding at the meeting at which he is elected and at any special meeting of the Council during his term of office, has, also, according to the present Constitution, a representative function, but all his acts are devoid of authority, and his utterances have only so much weight as is in the reason of them. The function of the moderator as now interpreted by the National Council is the result of an interesting evolution. From the beginning of the Council in 1871 until the accession of Rev. Amory H. Bradford, D. D., as moderator in 1901, the moderator was simply a presiding officer. Dr. Bradford introduced a change in this custom of thirty years' standing, taking his suggestion from the usage in England.

The first meeting of the Council in Oberlin in 1871 continued several days under its temporary organization before electing as its permanent moderator Rev. William Ives Buddington, D. D., of Brooklyn. The constitution adopted toward the close of the meeting provided that

At the beginning of every stated or special session there shall be chosen, from those present as members, a moderator and one or more assistant moderators, to preside over their deliberations.

At St. Louis in 1880 the question of the eligibility of honorary members was raised, and it was voted

That in the opinion of the Council, honorary members are not eligible to the office of moderator.

This vote was virtually set aside at Kansas City in 1913 by the election of an honorary member as first assistant

moderator; and this precedent makes an honorary member eligible as moderator or assistant.

At the beginning of each of the early meetings there was considerable waste of time through lack of preparation of business. The Council of 1886 which met in Chicago was in very many respects a notable one. Not the least of its features of interest was the activity of the Provisional Committee, which, under the chairmanship of an efficient young layman, Samuel B. Capen, frankly exceeded its powers, laid out a program with business arranged from the beginning, and submitted nominations for the more important committees.

In reporting these innovations, the committee said:

> A practical matter in the organization of the Council calls for your recognition and action if the Council please. The business of such a body must take shape largely in the hands of committees, and they need to be appointed as early as possible to give time for deliberation and due reports. But the moderator comes to the chair with no anticipation, and in shaping committees in haste, and from a roll still to be made out, would be likely to miss some of the best results, regarding both geographical considerations and the assignment of the very best men to important places; nor would their selection by nomination be any safer. Not because we desire the responsibility, but under our general instructions to make "needful arrangements," and following the actual usage of previous years, we choose to be frank in saying that we have made provisional selection of some such committees, subject, of course, to your approval, by the voice of your moderator or otherwise, as you may direct.
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> The difficulty seems to call for your action in one of two ways, either giving the Provisional Committee authority to act as a nominating committee, at the outset of the session, and until a nominating committee is chosen; or, precluding such action on their part, by requiring the selection of all committees by the suffrage of the Council itself when assembled.

The Council was gratified by the efficiency of its Provisional Committee, but was fearful of the abuse of power by subsequent committees. It therefore was unwilling to lodge with the Provisional Committee so much of power as had been suggested. It hit upon what seemed the happy way of providing for the prompt organization of the Council without danger of overmuch politics. If the moderator of the last Council (they did not call him the retiring mod-

erator) were to call the next Council to order and appoint the committees for business, credentials and nomination, at the Council "subsequent to the one at which he is elected" (they underscored the word "subsequent" for it was their new idea) no danger of centralization could arise.

The committee of seven to whom the matter was referred reported later in the meeting, the following, which later became the Fourteenth By-Law:

> Presiding officers shall retain their offices until their successors are chosen, and the presiding moderator, at the opening of the session subsequent to the one at which he was elected, shall name the Nominating Committee, the Business Committee, and the Committee on Credentials; and he shall be an honorary member of the Council.

So small did the moderator bulk in this plan in the mind of the Council that one searches in vain through the index of the minutes of the Council of 1886 for the word "moderator." Nor does the action appear under the caption "Moderator" in the National Council Digest. The committee that drafted this by-law were surprised in later years when they found that they had made possible the theory of a moderatorship which might be held over from one Council to the next. Such, certainly, was not their intention, and it is equally certain that the Council would have voted it down had it suspected that such an interpretation could be put upon it.

The very next meeting of the Council at Worcester in 1889 abridged the powers of the moderator. Two of the three committees were taken away from the moderator. Only one was left to him, the Committee on Nominations, and at Syracuse in 1895 this one remaining committee was made not an appointment but a nomination by the moderator, subject to the approval of the Council.

At Portland, Maine, in 1901, it was voted that "The moderator is expected to open the Council immediately following the one at which he is elected with an address on a subject to be selected by himself." This the moderator

was already doing, and the custom had met with favor, and was thus approved for subsequent Councils.

At Des Moines in 1904, the Council was asked to define the sphere of the moderatorship, and a report was presented by a committee which set forth that the sphere of the moderatorship had twice been enlarged, once by providing that the moderator should preside at the organization of the following Council, and again in permitting him to deliver an opening address, and it advised in favor of a further enlargement of his sphere of influence. The resolution proposed was as follows:

> In view of the widening opportunities of Congregationalism and the increasing desire for fellowship through denominational representation, it is the sense of the Council, that the moderator interpret his position generously, as having, in addition to presiding duties, a representative function; that visiting upon invitation, churches and Associations, so far as he may be able and disposed, addressing the churches, if in his judgment occasion requires it, and, in general, serving the churches, be regarded as his prerogative.
>
> But it is understood that all his acts and utterances shall be devoid of authority, and that for them shall be claimed and to them given only such weight and force as there is weight and force in the reason of them.

The resolution was warmly debated on the floor of the Council, some members claiming that it was unconstitutional and based on the misinterpretation of the intent of an ambiguous by-law. It was urged that the moderator must be a member of the Council, and that all memberships expired with the meeting, regular or special, and that therefore the moderator could not continue to exercise the functions of that office without plain violation of the Constitution as it then read. The resolution, however, prevailed, and has been accepted since as the Council's interpretation of the Fourteenth By-Law as it stood before the present revision.

Recognizing the evident desire of the churches as represented in the National Council, the Committee on Constitution, in drafting the new Constitution in preparation for

the Council of 1913, defined the moderator's powers in terms of wider service than the previous Constitution.

(1) At each stated meeting of the Council there shall be chosen from among those present as voting members of the Council, a moderator and a first and a second assistant moderator, who shall hold office for two years and until their successors are elected and qualified.

(2) The moderator shall preside at the opening of the meeting of the Council following that at which he is elected, and may deliver an address on a subject of his own selection.

(3) The moderator immediately after his election shall take the chair, and, after prayer, shall at once proceed to complete the organization of the Council.

(4) The representative function of the moderator shall be that of visiting and addressing churches and Associations upon their invitation, so far as he may be able and disposed. It is understood that all his acts and utterances shall be devoid of authority, and that for them shall be claimed and to them given only such weight and force as there is weight and force in the reason of them.

What Are the Duties of the Secretary of the National Council? The Secretary of the National Council is both a recording and corresponding secretary. He keeps the records of the Council, edits and distributes programs and registration blanks for its meetings, and gathers, edits and publishes denominational statistics. He is also in the nature of the case in frequent consultation with officers or state organizations, with pastors and local church officers and with committees and commissions of the National Council. The Council in session at Kansas City in 1913 thus defines his prerogatives and duties:

The secretary shall keep the records and conduct the correspondence of the Council and of the Executive Committee. He shall edit the Year Book and other publications, and shall send out notices of all meetings of the Council and of its Executive Committee. He shall aid the committees and commissions of the Council, and shall be the secretary of the Commission on Missions. He shall be available for advice and help in matters of polity and constructive organization, and render to the churches such services as shall be appropriate to his office. He may, like the moderator, represent the Council and the churches in interdenominational relations. For his aid one or more assistants shall be chosen at each meeting of the Council to serve during such meeting.

Is There Danger That the National Council Will Commit the Denomination to Disastrous Policies? The danger

that the National Council will some time assume larger functions than belong to it and commit the denomination to disastrous policies is not wholly imaginary. The history of denominational organization abounds in warnings. The love of power grows easily among those who come to possess it, and some organizations, very innocent in their inception, have developed large and insidious powers of usurpation. Two things, however, are to be remembered. First—The National Council can never commit the churches beyond their own power of veto or repeal. Second—If the National Council does not commit the denomination, someone else will. The Connecticut Missionary Society, a state organization, committed the whole denomination to the Plan of Union, by reason of which the growth of our churches was stifled for fifty-one disastrous years, and the deed having been done, was done beyond recall of any one state organization. It required what was practically a National Council in 1852 to repeal what the single state society did in 1801. The organic unity of the Congregational churches calls for a vehicle of expression through which the churches may speak unitedly. It is better for the denomination, if it is to be put on record at all, to speak through an authorized medium of its own creation rather than through some unauthorized and non-representative body. The danger is not averted by failing to use an accredited organization such as the National Council; on the contrary, the experience of the Congregational churches tends to show that it is increased. The National Council has as yet no blunder to its credit at all comparable with the Plan of Union of 1801.

Liberty Not Threatened. It is time, of course, to repeat the ancient and honorable reminder that such a national body as is now being described, set at the head of the Congregational representative system, does not threaten the liberties of the churches. It declines legislative and judicial functions. It has no authority to intrude into the private affairs of a single church. It offers no coercive interference to conferences and associations in their respective fields. As we have seen, the churches organize the Council, and the movement is from below upward. The Council has nothing but what is left over from the lower bodies—left over

because too great for even state management. The Council is a national union for national purposes. On these wide issues it formulates the thought and will of the churches. It spreads these formulations before all the churches at once. It organizes action in which the whole denomination can co-operate. It has apparatus for executing the ascertained will of the denomination. Thus it is the servant of the whole body, the agency through which six thousand churches may act as one on lines of universal Congregational duty.—*Nash:* Congregational Administration, pp. 149, 150.

The Churches Rule the National Council. The portion of administrative responsibility which should be nationally met being already assigned to the National Council we have an arrangement simple, obvious and flexible. Every group of churches large and small can make itself felt, if it desires, in the guidance of our world-wide work. We can easily change the method of representation if experience shall so suggest. We can introduce features to meet special conditions as in providing for members at large for one Board and another. We can provide agencies to advise the Council concerning the detail of its responsibilities such as the Commission on Missions. The Council by reason of the bulk and importance of the work under its care will command the interest of strong men and women. Decisions reached will be put into force without delay since all parts of the missionary structure are included in a unified view. Behind the whole will be the entire life of the churches, which ought surely to receive new vigor from closer and more responsible contact with these inspiring tasks.—*Herring:* Report of Secy. Nat. Council, New Haven, 1915.

Congregationalism and Liberty. The greatest contribution of Congregationalism to American life has been its sublime faith in liberty, both in Church and State, and its insistence on education as an indispensable condition of the maintenance of a liberty which will not degenerate into license.

The distinctive message of present day Congregationalism for America is a call to repentance, and to faith in the principles of Jesus Christ as the law both for individuals and nations, the message unencumbered by any doctrines concerning sacraments or clerical orders or ecclesiastical organization, and set free from all traditional theories and interpretations which hinder the progress of the kingdom of love.—*Charles E. Jefferson.*

Congregationalists have a distinct message and mission to modern thought and life. They stand for essential loyalty to evangelical Christianity, preserving its permanent content as historically transmitted, but adapting its statement reverently and courageously to the thought-forms of the generation. Congregational churches offer a hospitable and satisfying home for souls who are determined to think for themselves in religion, who crave simple forms for the expression of common worship, and who cherish the ideal of freedom in Church and State alike. The genius of Congregationalism is close kin to that of American democracy and the permanence of its service to American life is warranted by this fact.—*Ozora S. Davis.*

THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

(Adopted October 25, 1913.)

(Including the Amendments adopted at New Haven, October, 1915.)

The Congregational Churches of the United States, by delegates in National Council assembled, reserving all the rights and cherished memories belonging to this organization under its former constitution, and declaring the steadfast allegiance of the churches composing the Council to the faith which our fathers confessed, which from age to age has found its expression in the historic creeds of the Church universal and of this communion, and affirming our loyalty to the basic principles of our representative democracy, hereby set forth the things most surely believed among us concerning faith, polity, and fellowship:

FAITH

We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, goodness, and love; and in Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord and Saviour, who for us and our salvation lived and died and rose again and liveth evermore; and in the Holy Spirit, who taketh of the things of Christ and revealeth them to us, renewing, comforting, and inspiring the souls of men. We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the gospel to all mankind, exalting the worship of the one true God, and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of human brotherhood. Depending, as did our fathers, upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God; and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting.

POLITY

We believe in the freedom and responsibility of the individual soul, and the right of private judgment. We hold to the autonomy of the local church and its independence of all ecclesiastical control. We cherish the fellowship of the churches, united in district, state, and national bodies, for counsel and co-operation in matters of common concern.

THE WIDER FELLOWSHIP

While affirming the liberty of our churches, and the validity of

our ministry, we hold to the unity and catholicity of the Church of Christ, and will unite with all its branches in hearty co-operation; and will earnestly seek, so far as in us lies, that the prayer of our Lord for his disciples may be answered, that they all may be one.

United in support of these principles, the Congregational Churches in National Council assembled agree in the adoption of the following Constitution:

ARTICLE I.—NAME

The name of this body is the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States.

ARTICLE II.—PURPOSE

The purpose of the National Council is to foster and express the substantial unity of the Congregational churches in faith, polity, and work; to consult upon and devise measures and maintain agencies for the promotion of their common interests; to co-operate with any corporation or body under control of or affiliated with the Congregational churches, or any of them; and to do and to promote the work of the Congregational churches of the United States in their national, international, and interdenominational relations.

ARTICLE III.—MEMBERS

1. *Delegates.* (*a*) The churches in each District Association shall be represented by one delegate. Each association having more than ten churches shall be entitled to elect one additional delegate for each additional ten churches or major fraction thereof. The churches in each State Conference shall be represented by one delegate. Each conference having churches whose aggregate membership is more than ten thousand shall be entitled to elect one additional delegate for each additional ten thousand members or major fraction thereof. States having associations but no conference, or vice versa, shall be entitled to their full representation.

(*b*) Delegates shall be divided, as nearly equally as practicable, between ministers and laymen.

(*c*) The Secretary and the Treasurer shall be members, *ex officiis*, of the Council.

(*d*) Any delegate who shall remove from the bounds of the conference or association by which he has been elected to the Council shall be deemed by the fact of that removal to have resigned his membership in the Council, and the Conference or Association may proceed to fill the unexpired term by election.

2. *Honorary Members.* Former moderators and assistant moderators of the Council, ministers serving the churches entertaining the the Council, persons selected as preachers or to prepare papers, or to serve upon committees or commissions chosen by the Council, missionaries present who are in the service of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and have been not less than seven years in that service, together with one delegate each from such theological seminaries and colleges as are recognized by

the Council, may be enrolled as honorary members and shall be entitled to all privileges of members in the meeting of the Council except those of voting and initiation of business.

3. *Corresponding Members.* The Council shall not increase its own voting membership, but members of other denominations, present by invitation or representing their denominations, representatives of Congregational bodies in other lands, and other persons who represent important interests, or have rendered distinguished services, may, by vote, be made corresponding members, and entitled to the courtesy of the floor.

4. *Vacancies and Alternates.* Each state or district organization may provide in its own way for filling vacancies in its delegation. In the absence of any special rule on the part of such state or district body, the Council will recognize the right of the delegates present to fill vacancies in their own delegation.

An alternate or substitute enrolled as a member of the Council and certified to the societies for membership therein, shall be thereafter deemed a member instead of the primary delegate for the term for which that delegate was elected.

5. *Terms of Membership.* At its stated meeting in 1915, the National Council will divide all delegates, unless they shall have been so divided by the bodies electing them, into two classes, to serve respectively for two and four years. Thereafter the term of delegates shall be four years.

The term of a member shall begin at the opening of the next stated meeting of the Council after his election, and shall expire with the opening of the second stated meeting of the Council thereafter. He shall be a member of any intervening special meeting of the Council.

ARTICLE IV.—MEETINGS

1. *Stated Meetings.* The churches shall meet in National Council once in two years, the time and place of meeting to be announced at least six months previous to the meeting.

2. *Special Meetings.* The National Council shall convene in special meeting whenever any seven of the general state organizations so request.

3. *Quorum.* Delegates present from a majority of the states entitled to representation in the Council shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE V.—BY-LAWS

The Council may make and alter By-Laws at any stated meeting by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting; provided, that no new By-Law shall be enacted and no By-Law altered or repealed on the day on which the change is proposed.

ARTICLE VI.—AMENDMENTS

This Constitution shall not be altered or amended, except at a stated meeting, and by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, notice thereof having been given at a previous stated meeting, or the proposed alteration having been requested by some general state organization of churches entitled to representation in the Council, and published with the notification of the meeting.

BY-LAWS

I.—THE CALL OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

1. The call for any meeting shall be issued by the Executive Committee and signed by their chairman and by the Secretary of the Council. It shall contain a list of topics proposed for consideration at the meeting. The Secretary shall seasonably furnish blank credentials and other needful papers to the scribes of the several district and state organizations of the churches entitled to representation in the Council.

2. The meetings shall ordinarily be held in the latter part of October.

II.—THE FORMATION OF THE ROLL

Immediately after the call to order the Secretary shall collect the credentials of delegates present, and these persons shall be *prima facie* the voting membership for purposes of immediate organization. Contested delegations shall not delay the permanent organization, but shall be referred to the Committee on Credentials, all contested delegations refraining from voting until their contest is settled.

III.—THE MODERATOR

1. At each stated meeting of the Council there shall be chosen from among the members of the Council, a Moderator and a first and second Assistant Moderator, who shall hold office for two years and until their successors are elected and qualified.

2. The Moderator immediately after his election shall take the chair, and after prayer shall at once proceed to complete the organization of the Council, and to cause rules of order to be adopted.

3. The representative function of the Moderator shall be that of visiting and addressing churches and associations upon their invitations, and of representing the Council and the Congregational churches in the wider relations of Christian fellowship, so far as he may be able and disposed. It is understood that all his acts and utterances shall be devoid of authority and that for them shall be claimed and to them given only such weight and force as inhere in the reason of them.

4. The Moderator shall preside at the opening of the stated meeting of the Council following that at which he is elected, and may deliver an address on a subject of his own selection.

IV.—THE SECRETARY

The Secretary shall keep the records and conduct the correspondence of the Council and of the Executive Committee. He shall edit the Year Book and other publications, and shall send out notices of all meetings of the Council and of its Executive Committee. He shall aid the committees and commissions of the Council and shall be secretary of the Commission on Missions. He shall be available for advice and help in matters of polity and constructive organization, and render to the churches such services as shall be appropriate to his office. He may, like the Moderator, represent the Council and the churches in interdenominational rela-

tions. For his aid one or more assistants shall be chosen at each meeting of the Council to serve during such meeting.

V.—THE TREASURER

The Treasurer shall receive and hold all income contributed or raised to meet the expenses of the Council, shall disburse the same on the orders of the Executive Committee, and shall give bond in such sum as the Executive Committee shall from time to time determine.

VI.—TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office of the Secretary, Treasurer, and of any other officer not otherwise provided for shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are chosen, and continue until the close of the next stated meeting, and until their successors are elected and qualified.

VII.—COMMITTEES

As soon as practicable after taking the chair, the Moderator shall cause to be read to the Council the names proposed by the Nominating Committee for a Business Committee and a Committee on Credentials. These names shall be chosen so as to secure representation to different parts of the country, and the names shall be published in the denominational papers at least one month before the meeting of the Council, and printed with t e call of the meeting. The Council may approve these nominations or change them in whole or in part.

1. *The Committee on Credentials.* The Committee on Credentials shall prepare and report as early as practicable a roll of members. Of this committee the Secretary shall be a member.

2. *The Business Committee.* The Business Committee shall consist of not less than nine members. It shall prepare a docket for the use of the Council, and subject to its approval. All business to be proposed to the Council shall first be presented to this committee, but the Council may at its pleasure consider any item of business for which such provision has been refused by the committee.

3. *The Nominating Committee.* The Nominating Committee shall consist of nine members, to be elected by the Council on the nomination of the Moderator, and shall serve from the close of one stated meeting till the close of the following stated meeting of the Council. Five members shall be so chosen for four years, and four for two years, and thereafter members shall be chosen for four years. This committee shall nominate to the Council all officers, committees, and commissions for which the Council does not otherwise provide. But the Council may, at its pleasure, choose committees, commissions, or officers by nomination from the floor or otherwise as it shall from time to time determine. Members of the Nominating Committee who have served for a full term shall not be eligible for re-election until after an interval of two years.

4. *The Executive Committee.* The Executive Committee shall consist of the Moderator, the Secretary, and nine other persons, and shall be so chosen that the terms of the elected members shall ultimately be six years, the term of three members expiring at each stated meeting of the Council.

5. *Other Committees.* (1) Other committees may be appointed

from time to time, and in such manner as the Council shall determine, to make report during the meeting at which they are appointed.

(2) On such committees any member of the Council, voting or honorary, is eligible for service.

(3) All such committees terminate their existence with the meeting at which they are appointed.

(4) No question or report will be referred to a committee except by vote of the Council.

(5) Committees shall consist of five persons unless otherwise stated.

(6) Unless otherwise ordered, the first named member of a committee shall be chairman.

VIII.—THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Executive Committee shall transact such business as the Council shall from time to time direct, and in the intervals between meetings of the Council shall represent the Council in all matters not belonging to the corporation and not otherwise provided for. They shall have authority to contract for all necessary expenditures and to appoint one or more of their number who shall approve and sign all bills for payment; shall consult the interests of the Council and act for it in intervals between meetings in all matters of business and finance, subject to the approval of the Council; and shall make a full report of all their doings, the consideration of which shall be first in order of business after organization.

2. They may fill any vacancy occurring in their own number or in any commission, committee, or office in the intervals of meeting, the persons so appointed to serve until the next meeting of the Council.

3. They shall appoint any committee or commission ordered by the Council, but not otherwise appointed; and committees or commissions so appointed shall be entered in the minutes as by action of the Council.

4. They shall select the place, and shall specify in the call the place and precise time at which each meeting of the Council shall begin.

5. They shall provide a suitable form of voucher for the expenditures of the Council, and shall secure a proper auditing of its accounts.

6. They shall prepare a definite program for the Council, choosing a preacher and selecting topics for discussion and persons to prepare and present papers thereon.

7. They shall assign a distinct time, not to be changed except by special vote of the Council, for

(*a*) The papers appointed to be read before the Council.

(*b*) The commissions appointed by one Council to report at the next, which may present the topics referred to them for discussion or action.

(*c*) The benevolent societies and theological seminaries.

All other business shall be set for other specified hours, and shall not displace the regular order, except by special vote of the Council.

IX.—COMMISSIONS

1. Special committees appointed to act *ad interim*, other than the Executive Committee and Nominating Committee, shall be designated as commissions.

2. Commissions are expected to report at the next meeting following their appointment, and no commission other than the Commission on Missions shall continue beyond the next stated meeting of the Council except by special vote of the Council.

3. No commission shall incur expense except as authorized by the Council, or its Executive Committee.

4. Any member in good standing of a Congregational church is eligible for service on any commission, or *ad interim* committee.

5. Commissions shall choose their own chairmen, but the first named member shall call the first meeting and act as temporary chairman during the organization of the commission.

X.—CONGREGATIONAL NATIONAL SOCIETIES

With the consent of our National Missionary Societies, whose approval is a necessary preliminary, the following shall define the relation of these societies to the National Council:

The foreign missionary work of the Congregational churches of the United States shall be carried on under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the co-operating Woman's Boards of Missions; and the home missionary work of these churches, for the present under the auspices of the Congregational Home Missionary Society, the American Missionary Association, the Congregational Education Society, the Congregational Church Building Society, and the Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society, hereinafter called the Home Societies, and the Woman's Home Missionary Federation.

1. *The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.* This Board and the co-operating Woman's Boards shall be the agency of the Congregational churches for the extension of Christ's kingdom abroad.

a. Membership. The voting membership of the American Board shall consist, in addition to the present life members, of two classes of persons. (*a*) One class shall be composed of the members of the National Council, who shall be deemed nominated as corporate members of the American Board by their election and certification as members of the said National Council, said nominations to be ratified and the persons so named elected by the American Board. Their terms as corporate members of the American Board shall end, in each case, when they cease to be members of the National Council. (*b*) There may also be chosen by the American Board one hundred and fifty corporate members-at-large. The said one hundred and fifty corporate members-at-large shall be chosen in three equal sections, and so chosen that the term of each section shall be ultimately six years, one section being chosen every second year at the meeting in connection with the meeting of the National

Council. No new voting members, other than herein provided, shall be created.

b. Officers and Committees. The officers and committees of the American Board shall be such as the Board itself may from time to time determine.

c. Meetings. Regular meetings of the American Board shall be held annually. That falling in the same year in which the National Council holds its meeting shall be held in connection with the meeting of said Council. Meetings in other years shall be held at such time and place as the Board may determine. Important business, especially such as involves extensive modifications of policy, shall, so far as possible, be reserved for consideration in those meetings held in connection with the meeting of the National Council.

d. Reports. It shall be the duty of the American Board to make a full and accurate report of its condition and work to the National Council at each stated meeting of that body.

2. *The Home Societies.* These societies, with the Woman's Home Missionary Federation, shall be the agencies of the Congregational churches for the extension of Christ's kingdom in the United States.

a. Membership. The voting membership of the several home societies shall consist, in addition to such existing life members and other members of the society in question as may be regarded as legally necessary, of two classes of persons.

(*a*) One class shall be composed of the members of the National Council so long as they remain members of said Council.

(*b*) There may also be chosen corporate members-at-large by the said societies, in the following numbers, viz.: by the Congregational Home Missionary Society, ninety; by the American Missionary Association, sixty; by the Congregational Church Building Society, thirty; by the Congregational Education Society, eighteen; and by the Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society, eighteen. The said corporate members-at-large shall be chosen by each of the said societies in three equal sections and so chosen that the term of each section shall be ultimately six years, one section being chosen every second year at the meeting held in connection with the meeting of the National Council. In this selection one-fifth of the said corporate members-at-large may be chosen from the organizations for the support of Congregational activities affiliated in the Woman's Home Missionary Federation. No new voting members, other than herein provided, shall be created by any society.

b. Officers and Committees. The officers and committees of the several home societies shall be such as the societies themselves may from time to time determine.

c. Meetings. Regular meetings of the Home Societies shall be held annually. Those falling in the same year in which the National Council holds its meeting shall be held in connection with the meeting of said Council. Meetings in other years shall be held at such times and places as the societies themselves may determine. Important business, especially such as involves extensive modifications of policy, shall, so far as possible, be reserved for

consideration in those meetings held in connection with the meeting of the National Council.

d. Reports. It shall be the duty of each of the Home Societies to make a full and accurate report of its condition and work to the National Council at each stated meeting of that body.

XI.—THE COMMISSION ON MISSIONS

1. On nomination by the standing committee on Nominations, the National Council shall elect fourteen persons, and on nomination by the several national societies, home and foreign, shall also elect one person from each society, and on similar nomination one each from the whole body of Woman's Boards of Foreign Missions and from the Woman's Home Missionary Federation; who, together with the Secretary of the National Council *ex officio*, shall constitute a Commission on Missions.

2. *Members.* The members of the Commission on Missions shall be divided as nearly as possible into two equal sections in such manner that the term of each section shall be ultimately four years and the term of one section shall expire at each biennial meeting of the Council. In these choices due consideration shall be given to convenience of meeting, as well as to the geographical representation of the churches. No member except the Secretary of the National Council, whether nominated by the Standing Committee on Nominations of the National Council or by the societies, who has served on said Commission for two full successive terms of four years each, shall be eligible for re-election until after two years shall have passed. Unpaid officers of any of the missionary societies of the churches shall be eligible to this Commission, but no paid officer or employee of a missionary society shall be eligible. The Commission shall choose its own chairman, and have power to fill any vacancy in its own number until the next stated meeting of the Council.

3. *Duties.* While the Commission on Missions shall not be charged with the details of the administration of the several missionary societies, it shall be its duty to consider the work of the home and foreign societies above named, to prevent duplication of missionary activities, to effect all possible economies in administration, and to seek to correlate the work of the several societies so as to secure the maximum of efficiency with the minimum of expense. It shall have the right to examine the annual budgets of the several societies and have access to their books and records. It may freely give its advice to the said societies regarding problems involved in their work, and it shall make recommendations to the several societies when, in its judgment, their work can be made more efficient or economical. It shall make report of its action to the National Council at each stated meeting of that body, and present to said Council such recommendations as it may deem wise for the furtherance of the efficiency and economical administration of the several societies. In view of the evident conviction of a large portion of the churches that the multiplicity of the Congregational Home Societies is not consistent with the greatest economy and efficiency, the Commission on Missions shall examine present conditions and shall recommend to the National Council such simplification or consolidation as shall seem expedient.

4. *Expenses.* The members of the Commission on Missions shall serve without salary. The necessary expenses of the Commission shall be paid from the treasury of the National Council, and said Council may limit the amount of expense which may be incurred in any year. All bills for payment shall be certified by the chairman of the Commission.

XII.—THE CORPORATION FOR THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

1. The corporate members of the corporation shall consist of fifteen persons, elected by the Council at stated meetings, and of the Moderator and Secretary associated *ex officiis* with them.

2. The terms for which corporate members are elected shall be six years.

3. The corporate members elected at the meeting of 1910 are divided into two classes of eight and seven respectively. The successors of the class of eight shall be chosen at the meeting of 1913 and of the class of seven at the meeting of 1915. Those so elected shall hold office until their successors are duly elected.

4. The corporation shall have a treasurer. He shall administer his office as the by-laws of the corporation may provide.

5. The corporation shall receive and hold all property, real and personal, of the Council, and all property, real and personal, which may be conveyed to it in trust, or otherwise, for the benefit of Congregational churches or of any Congregational church; and acting for the Council between the meetings of the Council in all business matters not otherwise delegated or reserved, shall do such acts and discharge such trusts as properly belong to such a corporation and are in conformity to the constitution, rules, and instructions of the Council.

6. The corporation may adopt for its government and the management of its affairs standing by-laws and rules not inconsistent with its charter nor with the constitution, by-laws, and rules of the Council.

7. The corporation shall make such reports to the Council as the Council may require.

XIII.—DEVOTIONAL AND OTHER SERVICES

1. In the sessions of the National Council, half an hour every morning shall be given to devotional services, and the daily sessions shall be opened with prayer and closed with prayer or singing. The evening sessions shall ordinarily be given to meetings of a specially religious rather than of a business character.

2. The Council will seek to promote in its sessions a distinctly spiritual uplift, and to this end will arrange programs for the presentation of messages for the general public attending such gatherings. But the first concern of the Council shall be the transaction of the business of the denomination so far as that shall be intrusted to it by the churches; and the Council will meet in separate or executive session during the delivery of addresses whenever the necessity of the business of the Council may appear to require it.

XIV.—TIME LIMITATION

No person shall occupy more than half an hour in reading any paper or report, and no speaker upon any motion or resolution, or upon any paper read, shall occupy more than ten minutes, without the unanimous consent of the Council.

In case of discussion approaching the time limit set for it, the Moderator may announce the limitation of speeches to less than ten minutes, subject to the approval of the Council.

XV.—THE PRINTING OF REPORTS

Such reports from commissions and statements from societies or theological seminaries as may be furnished to the Secretary seasonably in advance of the meeting may be printed at the discretion of the Executive Committee, and sent to the members elect, together with the program prepared. Not more than ten minutes shall be given to the presentation of any such report.

XVI.—THE PUBLICATION OF STATISTICS

The Council will continue to make an annual compilation of statistics of the churches, and a list of such ministers as are reported by the several state organizations. The Secretary is directed to present at each stated meeting comprehensive and comparative summaries for the two years preceding.

XVII.—FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BODIES

The Council, as occasion may arise, will hold communication with the general Congregational bodies of other lands, and with the general ecclesiastical organizations of other churches of evangelical faith in our own land, by delegates appointed by the Council or by the Executive Committee.

XVIII.—TEMPORARY SUBSTITUTION

A duly enrolled delegate may deputize any alternate duly appointed by the body appointing the delegate to act for him at any session of the Council by special designation applicable to the session in question.

XXV. THE BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES

Through What Agencies Do the Congregational Churches Conduct Their Benevolent and Missionary Work? The Congregational churches conduct their benevolent and missionary work through missionary societies variously organized. Some of these are entirely undenominational or interdenominational, such as the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society; others, which by their constitutions are undenominational, have become virtually denominational. This is true of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the American Missionary Association. Others, once undenominational, have now become denominational by change in their name and constitutions. Of these are the Congregational Home Missionary Society, formerly the American Home Missionary Society, and the Congregational Education Society, formerly the American College and Education Society. Still others grew out of the life of the denomination and, though in some cases there were changes in name, remain avowedly denominational agencies. Of these are the Congregational Church Building Society, formerly the American Congregational Union; the Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society; and the Congregational Board of Ministerial Relief, formerly the Trustees of the National Council.

How Did the Interdenominational Societies Become Congregational? The interdenominational societies, such as the American Board, the American College and Education Society, American Home Missionary Society, and American Missionary Association, became virtually Congregational by the withdrawal of the Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, and other denominations from their support, and the organization by these bodies of denominational societies for the doing of similar work.

Did These Societies Occupy Distinct Fields of Activity?

The several societies have come through mutual agreement and denominational control to something approaching distinct fields of activity. As originally constituted, however, there was intentional overlapping. The American Missionary Association, for instance, was both a home and foreign missionary society, and grew out of a protest against certain policies of the American Board and American Home Missionary Society. The experience of the years has resulted in a reduction of harmful competition and a thoroughly helpful understanding between the societies, but something still is left to be desired in the way of complete adjustment.

When Was Consolidation of the Benevolent Societies First Considered? At the first meeting of the National Council, in Oberlin, in 1871, it was voted,

> In view of the number of existing organizations that collect contributions from our churches, some of which organizations are so closely affiliated in purpose and method that they contemplate essentially the same work; therefore, Resolved, that a committee of seven be appointed to consider and report at the next session of this Council whether any consolidation of said organizations is practicable, with a view to the promotion of greater unity and efficiency of operation, and the reduction of expenses that are felt to be needless and therefore burdensome.

This resolution sounds very modern and might have been repeated verbatim by every Council since. Its keynotes of "economy" and "efficiency" were those to which the Boston Council thirty-nine years later attuned the resolution that resulted in the appointment of the Commission of Nineteen on Polity. It is interesting to read the report of the committee adopted in 1874.

> Our present benevolent organizations were normal growths out of pressing necessities. . . . The wisdom of those who had the shaping of these organizations has been vindicated by the successful work accomplished. . . . Men have their favorite charities and . . . deprecate any change which is likely to touch the integrity of the organization in which their special interest is centered. . . . Other difficulties present themselves in the terms of incorporation of these societies, conditions on which trust funds are held, legacies in abeyance which may be forfeited, and various minor obstacles which need not be detailed at length. At the same time it is undeniable that there is a growing feeling in the churches that there might be an improvement in the charities of the denomination.

This also sounds very modern. The objections then urged against change, that the societies as they now exist have an honorable history, and each its own constituency, and that vested interests might conceivably be imperiled by change, are those still urged when change or combination is suggested. The undeniable fact remains, however, that after something more than forty years of appointment of committees and commissions, the churches believe that a simpler, more efficient, and more economical method ought to be devised.

Is the National Council Competent to Create a Benevolent Society? The National Council is competent to create as many benevolent societies as the Congregational churches desire to create and maintain through its agency. The organization incorporated March 24, 1885, as "The Trustees of the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States" is the creation of the National Council. It now is known as "The Congregational Board of Ministerial Relief" and that name is confirmed by its new charter granted by the Legislature of Connecticut in January, 1907. The National Council is as competent to create a home or foreign missionary society as a society for ministerial relief. Indeed, the Council could with entire legality have carried on all these functions without any change whatever in the original charter of "The Trustees of the National Council." That charter as originally granted contained no intimation whatever that the work of the society thus organized was to be rectricted to ministerial relief. The terms of the original charter are as follows:

Section 2. The object of the corporation is to do and promote charitable and Christian work for the advancement of the general interests of the Congregational churches of this country in accordance with resolutions and declarations made from time to time by the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States; and said corporation may co-operate with any other societies under the charge and control of churches of the Congregational order in the United States.

Section 3. Said corporation may acquire, by purchase, gift, devise, or otherwise, and hold and dispose of real and personal property for the purpose of its creation, not exceeding sixty thou-

sand dollars in value, and may make any contracts for promoting its objects and purposes, not inconsistent with law.

Section 4. The said National Council may make rules, orders and regulations for the government of said Board of Trustees, and said Board shall, at all times, be subject to the direction and control of said Council.

The National Council, accepting the charter, voted as follows:

Resolved, That the same be, and it is hereby, accepted by this Council.

Resolved, That this National Council, by this act, constitutes and empowers its provisional committee for the time being as the Trustees incorporated by the foregoing act, who shall have in charge and administer all moneys and other values belonging to it, or which may be contributed, bequeathed, or intrusted to it, limited only by their charter, the acts of this Council, or the expressed will of the donors.

In 1907 the object and powers of the organization were modified and limited as follows:

Section 4. The object of said corporation shall be to secure, hold, manage, and distribute funds for the relief of needy Congregational ministers and the needy families of deceased Congregational ministers, in accordance with resolutions and declarations adopted or made, from time to time, by the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States, or by any body which may succeed to the present functions of that council; and said corporation may co-operate with any other corporation or body which is under the charge and control of churches of the Congregational order in the United States, or of churches at the time affiliated with said order.

Section 5. The said National Council, or its successor as aforesaid, may, from time to time, make and alter rules, orders, and regulations for the government of said corporation, and said corporation shall at all times be subject to its direction and control; and the said National Council or such successor thereof may, from time to time, determine who shall be members of said corporation, may provide for filling vacancies in their number, and may appoint and remove members thereof.

There is nothing either in the Constitution of the National Council, or in the conditions governing the work of the denomination, to prevent the Council from creating a single new organization with powers as broad as those originally belonging to the Trustees of the National Council, or of incorporating one or more societies in any state or states of the Union for the doing of such work as the

churches desire unitedly to accomplish through such organizations.

What Is the American Board? The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions is a corporation created by the Massachusetts legislature in 1812. It was organized by the Massachusetts Association at Bradford, Mass., on June 29, 1810, in response to a request from a group of students of Andover Theological Seminary who had pledged themselves for foreign missionary work. The inception of this movement may be attributed to Samuel John Mills, born in 1783, in Torringford, Conn., who entered Williams College in 1806 and graduated in 1809. In that institution he organized in 1808 a little association called The Brethren, "to effect in the person of its members a mission or missions to the heathen."

The American Board has now been operated for more than one hundred years. Its drafts are honored by the banks of the remote nations of the Orient, and it has a record for fidelity and efficiency which make it easily the foremost of our denominational societies and keep it in the front rank of missionary organizations of the world. As originally constituted, the American Board was a close corporation, and still is technically a self-perpetuating body, but by its charter has been so modified that the National Council constitutes a large majority of its voting membership.

What Is the Congregational Education Society? The Congregational Education Society originated in the organization of the American Society for Educating Pious Youth for the Gospel Ministry, which was organized in Boston, December 7, 1815, and which soon became the "American Education Society." For four years Congregationalists and Presbyterians co-operated in the work, but in 1819 the Presbyterian General Assembly organized a Board of Education, since which time the Educational Society has been distinctly Congregational.

In 1843 there was organized in New York "the Society

for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West." The two were united in 1874 under the style of "American College and Education Society." In 1879 there was organized in Chicago "The New West Education Commission," which in 1893 united with the Education Society, and the name became the Congregational Education Society. In its organization it was a self-perpetuating body, but like the other societies it is now controlled by the National Council.

What Is the Home Missionary Society? The Congregational Home Missionary Society had its origin in New York on May 10, 1826, "in the American Home Missionary Society." This body succeeded the United Domestic Missionary Society, organized in 1822. As thus constituted, it represented a union of effort of Presbyterians, Dutch Reformed and Congregationalists. The Congregational churches of Massachusetts and Connecticut had organized Home Missionary Societies which, at first working independently, came gradually into closer fellowship with the New York society. The division of the Presbyterian body in 1837 into the Old School and the New School parties left the American Home Missionary Society less Presbyterian and more Congregational than it previously had been. On May 27, 1861, the New School Presbyterians withdrew in favor of some distinctly denominational agency of their own, leaving the society wholly Congregational. In 1893 its name was changed to the Congregational Home Missionary Society.

A Brief Outline of the History of Home Missions. Organized Home Missions in the United States began with the formation of the Connecticut Home Missionary Society, in 1798, followed by that of Massachusetts in 1799, after which the other New England States interested themselves in the sending of the Gospel to the new communities to the westward and formed similar organizations. In 1826 the American Home Missionary Society was organized in New York, originating in the contemporaneous initiative of the Massachusetts Society and an interdenominational organization in New York State and associating with it in affiliated relationship the other state bodies. This corporation is now the Congregational Home Missionary Society. At the first Congregation-

alists were associated in it with the Presbyterian, the Reformed and the Associate Reformed churches. The latter two soon withdrew and at the dissolution of the Plan of Union such participation of the Presbyterians as had not already been diverted was withdrawn and since that time this organization has been the agency of the Congregationalists, although independent of national organic relationship until the Kansas City meeting of the National Council.

Beginning in New York and Vermont, the missionaries of this society have gone with the advancing front of settlement to every part of this nation. It has been the agency through which the Congregational church was saved from being a sectional communion or from being obliterated entirely.

For a time all the work of promoting religion and Christian education fell to the Home Missionary Societies. Churches and Sunday Schools were planted, sanctuaries were provided, literature was supplied, schools and colleges were started, young men were prepared for the ministry. But in 1816 the need for ministers both in self-supporting churches and missionary fields occasioned the organization of the American Society for the Education of Pious Youth for the Gospel Ministry. This organization has absorbed two other societies whose work was to promote education, and is now the Congregational Education Society. In 1829 the Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, later called the Congregational Board of Publication, and in 1832 the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society were organized. Later these two merged to form the Congregational Publishing Society which became the Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society in 1882. In 1852 the Albany Convention was impressed with the need of aggressive work in building churches and its committee, which at first worked largely through Home Missions, grew through the Congregational Union to the Church Building Society. In 1882 the Publishing Society began to function in planting Sunday Schools, and, finally in 1892 the National Council appointed a Committee on Ministerial Relief for aiding needy ministers and their families. This has developed into the Board of Ministerial Relief. Thus the forces which went single handed to the task of Christianizing America in 1798, have gradually shared functions with associates until the call has arisen for co-ordination.

Since the organization of the National Society in 1826 the receipts of the Society have amounted to $27,970,123.52 and 76,374 years of labor have been performed by its missionaries. No man can measure the spiritual forces which have issued from these years of devotion.—Secy. Chas. E. Burton, in Report at National Council, 1915.

What Is the American Missionary Association? The American Missionary Association was organized in 1846 and was intended to be both a home and foreign missionary society. In 1854 it had 79 missionaries in foreign lands, including Africa, Jamaica, Sandwich Islands, Siam, Egypt and Canada. In so far as its work duplicated that of the

American Board, it was intended to give expression to the anti-slavery sentiment strongly dominant in the churches that supported it. Subsequently it transferred its foreign missionary work to the American Board and took over the Board's work for the American Indians. It has borne a noble testimony against caste and race prejudice, and has done a notable work in education and church extension among Negroes, Indians, Chinese, the Highlanders of the Southern mountains, and also in Alaska, Porto Rico and Hawaii. In its organization it is broadly democratic, every contributing church being entitled to elect a voting delegate to the annual meeting.

What Is the Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society? The Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society springs from the union of several organizations, the oldest of which was the Massachusetts Sabbath School Union, organized in May, 1825. This was in the beginning an interdenominational organization, but in 1832 became distinctively Congregational. It was incorporated in 1840 as the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society. The American Doctrinal Tract Society was organized in Taunton, Mass., June 24, 1829, and incorporated March 16, 1850. This became in 1854 the Congregational Board of Publication. On March 9, 1868, these two organizations were consolidated by the act of the Massachusetts legislature into the Congregational Sabbath School and Publishing Society. In 1870 the name was changed to the Congregational Publishing Society. In that year the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge disbanded and transferred its assets to the Congregational Publishing Society. On February 21, 1883, the name was changed to the Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society. Its voting membership, which has been confined to those constituted life members by payment of $20, in 1892 added a delegate membership representing state bodies and Congregational churches. The society conducts two distinct departments, one for publication and the other for mis-

sionary work, the funds of the two being deposited in separate banks. It establishes Sunday schools and encourages their growth into churches; it publishes Sunday school and other religious literature and owns and publishes "The Congregationalist," "The Pilgrim Teacher," "The Well Spring," and other periodicals.

What Is the Congregational Church Building Society? The Congregational Church Building Society was founded in 1853. It is incorporated under the laws of the State of New York and is a self-perpetuating body. It has assisted in the erection of more than 4,000 church buildings and 1,200 parsonages. It gives financial aid in two forms, both loan and grant, securing the same by trust mortgages on the property, with the provision that should the same cease to be used for Congregational church purposes, the churches shall be reimbursed for the money which they have contributed through this society.

What Is the Congregational Board of Ministerial Relief? The Congregational Board of Ministerial Relief is the one missionary organization created by the National Council. This corporation was chartered by the legislature of Connecticut, March 24, 1885, as "The Trustees of the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States." Its charter was sufficiently broad so that it could have conducted under that form of organization any kind of missionary work which the National Council might have chosen to perform for the Congregational churches. The title was confusing since the society undertook to do only one form of missionary work, and there was some prospect that the Council itself might desire incorporation on its own account, or at least to create a corporation acting for it in other relations than that for which this body existed. On March 27, 1907, the name was changed by action of the Connecticut legislature to the Congregational Board of Ministerial Relief. It is an organization which exists for the aid of aged and needy ministers and their dependent families.

What Are the Women's Societies? There are three Women's Boards for foreign missionary work: The Woman's Board of Missions, incorporated in Massachusetts; the Woman's Board of Missions of the Interior, incorporated in Illinois; the Woman's Board of Missions of the Pacific, incorporated in California. Each co-operates with the American Board and collects money through branches and auxiliaries and supports missionaries as teachers, evangelists, physicians and nurses. These missionaries are commissioned as missionaries of the American Board. The receipts of these three organizations have amounted in some years to more than a third of a million.

The Woman's Home Missionary Federation was organized in May, 1905, and is the only strictly national organization of Congregational women. There are thirty-three State Unions federated in this body, each of them being autonomous in its own territory, and each raising funds for the support of the Home Missionary societies, both state and national. The Federation represents the women of our Congregational churches on the Executive Committees of those of the national missionary bodies that admit women.

What Is the American Congregational Association? The American Congregational Association is an organization created in 1853, and chartered by the legislature of Massachusetts in 1854, which owns the Congregational House in Boston and maintains the Congregational Library.

What Was the Commission of Nineteen? The Commission of Nineteen on Polity was appointed by the National Council at Boston in 1910 "to formulate a consistent and practical scheme of administration, and to submit to the next Council a constitution and by-laws which embody their judgment." The Commission held a number of meetings, and at Kansas City in 1913 submitted a new constitution for the National Council, which was adopted with great heartiness.

What Is the Commission on Missions? The Commission on Missions is a body created by the National Council,

consisting of fourteen members and one additional member from each of the Societies, with one from the Woman's Boards and one from the Women's Home Missionary Federation, with the Secretary of the National Council. Their powers are described in By-Law XI of the National Council.

What Changes in the Missionary Societies Were Wrought at Kansas City? The National Council at Kansas City in 1913 changed its constitution so that with corresponding changes in the constitutions of the several missionary societies the voting members of the National Council now constitute a majority of the voting members of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the Congregational Home Missionary Society, the American Missionary Association, the Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society, the Congregational Church Building Society, the Congregational Education Society, and the Congregational Board of Ministerial Relief.

The voting membership of the American Board shall consist, in addition to the present life members, of two classes of persons. (a) One class shall be composed of the members of the National Council, who shall be deemed nominated as corporate members of the American Board by their election and certification as members of the said National Council, said nominations to be ratified and the persons so named elected by the American Board. Their terms as corporate members of the American Board shall end, in each case, when they cease to be members of the National Council. (b) There may also be chosen by the American Board one hundred and fifty corporate members-at-large. The said one hundred and fifty corporate members-at-large shall be chosen in three equal sections, and so chosen that the term of each section shall be ultimately six years, one section being chosen every second year at the meeting in connection with the meeting of the National Council. No new voting members, other than herein provided, shall be created.

There may also be chosen corporate members-at-large by the said societies, in the following numbers, viz.: by the Congregational Home Missionary Society, ninety; by the American Missionary Association, sixty; by the Congregational Church Building Society, thirty; by the Congregational Education Society, eighteen; and by the Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society, eighteen. The said corporate members-at-large shall be chosen by each of the said societies in three equal sections and so chosen that the term of each section shall be ultimately six years, one section being chosen every second year at the meeting held in connection with the meeting of the National Council. In this selection one-fifth of

the said corporate members-at-large may be chosen from the organizations for the support of Congregational activities affiliated in the Woman's Home Missionary Federation. No new voting members, other than herein provided, shall be created by any society.—By-Laws of the National Council, art. x.

What Changes in the Societies Were Accomplished in 1915? The National Council in session in New Haven in 1915 adopted a report submitted by the Commission on Missions, whose essential parts are given below. The practical results of this plan are as follows:

(1) The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions is not affected by this plan.

(2) The Congregational Board of Ministerial Relief and its Corporation for the Annuity Fund are not affected by this plan.

(3) The American Missionary Association is not affected excepting that the work of its white churches is transferred to the Congregational Home Missionary Society.

(4) For practical operation the work of establishing and maintaining Sunday Schools, of planting and assisting missionary churches, and of aiding in the erecting of church buildings and parsonages, is to be unified and regarded as a continuous process under the direction of what now are to be known as the Church Extension Boards.

(5) The educational work of the Sunday Schools and Publishing Society, including education through the printed page, is to be merged with that of the Congregational Education Society, in what are to be known as Religious Education Boards.

(6) All the societies affected by this merger are to retain their corporate existence, with their charters as heretofore, but are to change their constitutions or by-laws so as to carry these modifications into effect.

(7) The Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society is now to become The Congregational Publishing Society, the business and missionary interests being cared for by separate societies.

The Plan of Readjustment. The essential parts of the report

of the Commission on Missions relating to the readjustment of our missionary societies, adopted at New Haven in 1915, as follow:

Ministerial Relief. The status of the Congregational Board of Ministerial Relief remains unchanged. This corporation has a Board of Directors of fifteen members elected by the National Council. The Annuity Fund for Congregational Ministers is administered by the Board of Ministerial Relief.

American Missionary Association. The present status of the American Missionary Association remains unchanged. The Association is administered by an executive committee of fifteen members elected in five classes for a term of three years. Its missionary church work among white people is transferred to the Congregational Home Missionary Society.

The Church Extension Boards. This group consists of the Congregational Home Missionary Society, the Congregational Church Building Society, and the work of establishing and maintaining mission Sunday schools now carried on by the Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society. This Sunday School Extension work shall be conducted under the name Congregational Sunday School Society, and, if deemed expedient, may be incorporated for the purpose of holding property and receiving legacies and other gifts. The income of funds and other assets of the Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society which may have been given for the establishment and maintenance of mission Sunday schools shall be made available for the work as carried on under the new administration.

It is understood that the question of the transfer of the Sunday School Extension work of the S. S. & P. S. from that society to the group thus constituted is to be referred to the Directors of the Religious Education Boards in conference with the Directors of the Church Extension Boards and the Commission on Missions, these Directors being under instructions to arrange the transfer if the way be open. In any case the Commission is instructed to make report on the whole matter to the next Council.

(1) These three Societies, viz.: The Congregational Home Missionary Society, the Congregational Church Building Society and the Congregational Sunday School Society, shall have in common the following officers: President, Vice-Presidents, and Treasurer. The three societies shall be managed by a common Board of Directors of not more than thirty-six members. The Directors elected to serve for the years 1915-17 shall be named by the nominating committee of the National Council and elected by the members of the respective societies. They will assume responsibility when the resignations of their predecessors shall have been received. Prior to the next biennial meeting of the Council, each state Conference in which Congregational work is sufficiently advanced to justify its recognition by the National Council as an administrative unit, shall have the right to submit to the nominating committee of the National Council, which shall serve as the nominating committee for each of the societies in question, the names of two candidates, a minister and a layman, from which nomination an election of one director shall be made. At the expiration of the term a successor shall be chosen in the same manner. All directors shall be elected

by the societies at the biennial meetings held in connection with the meetings of the National Council. At the meeting of the societies in 1917, the directors shall be divided as nearly as possible into three equal sections in such manner that the term of each section shall ultimately be six years, and the term of one section shall expire at each biennial meeting of the Council. The Board of Directors shall have power to fill vacancies in its own number until the next regular meeting of the National Council.

(2) Between the meetings of the Board of Directors the work of this group of societies shall be under the immediate supervision of an executive committee, appointed by the Board of Directors, of not more than fifteen persons, a majority of whom shall be members of the Board. This committee shall hold regular monthly meetings and as many special meetings as may be deemed necessary. The actions of each session of the Executive Committee shall be submitted for approval to the Board of Directors.

(3) There shall be a common general secretary. The first election shall be by the Board of Directors on nomination by the Nominating Committee of the National Council. In 1917 and thereafter, the general secretary shall be elected at the biennial meeting on nomination of the Board of Directors. He shall have resonsible executive leadership of the entire work of the societies thus grouped. There shall be as many additional secretaries and other officers as may be found necessary.

(4) The activities of the societies thus grouped shall cover the field as indicated by their names, of church planting and maintenance of aiding in building churches and parsonages and organizing and fostering mission Sunday schools. The Board will organize this work as shall be found expedient.

(5) The main offices of the Church Extension Boards shall be in New York. If deemed advisable, there may also be offices in Boston, Chicago and San Francisco.

It is recommended that the officers associated with the district offices represent the total work of this group of societies, and that they shall present to their respective constituencies a unified appeal on behalf of the three great interests which they represent.

(6) All three societies are to appear in the denominational benevolence calendar, and there shall continue to be a separate apportionment for each. It is expected that this arrangement will be modified as experience may suggest.

The Religious Education Boards. (1) Upon the transfer of the Sunday school work, as herein provided, the name of the Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society is to be changed to the Congregational Publishing Society, and that the features of its work hitherto known as educational be assigned to the Congregational Educational Society. The functions of the Congregational Publishing Society will thus be exclusively those of a denominational publishing house, viz.: editing, manufacturing, and marketing Sunday school helps, books, periodicals, etc., of such nature and variety as may be deemed expedient.

(2) The two societies just named are to be placed under a common management as outlined below, the activities of each organ-

ization being kept distinct but so co-ordinated under a unified policy as that they shall move together to the attainment of the common ends for which both exist.

(3) The total field of religious education as covered by these two organizations through the printed page and otherwise will include comprehensively the following functions:

(a) Sunday school education through use of printed helps and field specialists.
(b) General religious education including any type of aid needed by pastors and churches for training in Christian history, doctrine, worship, denominational polity, plans, etc.
(c) Social Service. It is contemplated that this specialized feature of religious education shall receive due emphasis.
(d) Education in Missions. This will have primary reference to the training of the young in knowledge of the world wide operations of the Church.
(e) Editing, manufacturing and marketing such printed matter as will be required under above heads, together with such books and newspapers as the denomination desires to produce.
(f) Student Welfare. This will be a continuation of work now conducted by the Education Society for students in colleges, seminaries and universities.
(g) College Aid. This refers to the leadership and emergency aid given by the Education Society to colleges in the newer part of the country.

(4) This group of societies shall have in common the following officers: President, Vice-Presidents, and Treasurer. The societies shall be managed by a common Board of Directors of not to exceed twenty-four members. These directors shall be nominated by the nominating committee of the National Council, acting as the nominating committee of each of the societies concerned, except that at the meeting of the societies in 1917 and thereafter the American Board, the American Missionary Association and the Church Extension Boards respectively shall each have the right to nominate one director. The directors shall be elected by the societies at the biennial meetings held in connection with the meetings of the National Council. The directors elected to serve for 1915-17 shall assume responsibility when the resignations of their predecessors shall have been received. At the meeting of the societies in 1917 the directors shall be divided as nearly as possible into three equal sections in such manner that the term of each section shall ultimately be six years, and the term of one section shall expire at each biennial meeting of the Council. In the selection of the directors due regard shall be had for geographical distribution as well as for convenience of meetings. The Board of Directors shall have power to fill vacancies in its own number until the regular meeting of the National Council.

(5) There shall be a common general secretary. The first election shall be by the Board of Directors on nomination by the Nominating Committee of the National Council. In 1917 and thereafter, the general secretary shall be elected at the biennial meeting on nomination of the Board of Directors. He shall have responsible

executive leadership of the entire work of the societies thus grouped. There shall be as many additional secretaries and other officers as may be found necessary.

(6) It should be added that it is a part of the thought of the Commission that the denominational publishing house should attract to itself the bulk of the printing of the denominational agencies. The National Council will recommend what disposition shall be made of profits not required for additions to capital or for equipment.

(7) The Congregational Education Society will retain its present place in the denominational benevolence calendar.

(8) The main offices of the Religious Educational Boards shall be in Boston. If deemed expedient there may also be offices in New York, Chicago and San Francisco.

Relation to State Conferences. The Commission believes that there are no recommendations contained in this report that are not capable of such satisfactory adjustment to state interests as will insure cordial co-operation between the State Conferences and the National Societies. It may be added that no change is contemplated in the arrangement as to division of receipts now in force between the national and state home mission organizations.

The term of directorship in both the home missions and education boards is six years.

The Societies Needed to Be Under Control of the Denomination. So there came into existence one after another the missionary agencies which are now identified with Congregationalism. They have wrought on our behalf and wrought with conspicuous success. In every field of mission effort we have been pioneers and standard bearers. The sum of their achievements constitutes a noble chapter in our annals. So honorable is the record that one has no difficulty in believing that the fathers did the wise thing for their place and time.

None the less so long as two generations ago there began to be dissatisfaction with the plan. The Albany Convention of 1852 was in the nature of a protest against the home mission policies in vogue. The first triennial Council in 1871 pondered long on the organization of its missionary agencies. And the Council which met at New Haven in 1874 had before it a report on missionary readjustment only less bulky than the one which is laid before you at this session. So it has been during all the intervening years. What is the meaning of it? Why have the churches not been content with the substantial achievements which have been described? The answer may be phrased in various ways. But the kernel of it is in the fact that like all things human these administrative undertakings had an admixture of frailty and failure for whose prevention or cure the churches were helpless save by the disastrous method of withdrawing support. Moreover, it came to be felt that ours, the most democratic of organizations, was maintaining the most autocratic of agencies—autocratic not because of the intention or desire of their managers but because of the necessities of the situation. Naturally the question arose whether there was anything in the nature of the case which required the continuance of such an anomaly.—*Herring:* Report of Secy. of Nat. Council, New Haven, Oct., 1915.

XXVI. REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

Can Democracy Be Representative? Democracy can be representative, and if democracy is to obtain in any large way it must be representative. In a local town meeting every citizen may be present and participate actively in the proceedings. Even in a town meeting, however, the voter exercises something of a representative function. Usually the entire population is not present, but only the adult male population. A democracy in which only men vote, or only adults vote, is in the nature of the case representative. But even if it were possible or wise to gather all the inhabitants, men, women and children, into a meeting for the determination of matters of common concern, it is manifest that democracy in this simplest form could never be larger than parochial. Even so small a territory as a county must have representative government if it is to be governed democratically. The entire population of a state could never be assembled in one spot to do its business through mass meeting; and if that could be done no hall could be found in which they could be seated and hear each other's discussion.

Representation, therefore, is not merely consistent with democracy, but essential to it. The term "representative democracy" is comparatively new in the literature of Congregationalism, but the principle is not new. It is as fundamentally inherent in the idea of a council called for the ordination of a pastor as it is in the National Council itself. A committee of three appointed to buy shingles for the meeting house and authorized to purchase spruce or cedar according to their best discretion and the condition of the shingle market, is as thoroughly illustrative of all the principles involved in representative government as the District Association or the State Conference.

Congregationalists long shirked the inevitable logic of their own plan of organization. For many years they were

content to do the larger work of the denomination through bodies in which the churches were not directly represented. The new order of things is not less democratic than the old; it is more so. It is nothing more nor less than fundamental democracy applied through the representative system to affairs of state or national magnitude. The whole trend of Congregational development since the Albany Convention in 1852, to go no farther back, has been in the direction of the frank recognition of this principle in our denominational life. To that principle our denomination is now committed, not only by the Constitution of the National Council but by the inexorable logic of all our recent history.

The World Moves Toward Democracy. The drift of the world is irresistibly toward popular rights in their free and equal exercise. Even Romanism silently floats that way. And there will be neither retrocession nor retrograde. The oak never can go back into its acorn. A thousand years hence will find every polity, however named, honeycombed with the democratic element. All the other polities will "make obeisance" to our "sheaf." If there be a Pope then, he will be so only in name, while his people will govern themselves and him. I will not say that Congregationalism will have nothing to change to fit itself for the millennium, but I may say with all my heart, it can only need to perfect itself in the line of its own philosophy, and be all which its own normal possibilities suggest, to fit it for the fullness of that brighter day. I believe it is the only polity of which as much can be truly said.—*Dexter:* Handbook, p. 135.

Democratic Liberty. The imperishable contribution of Congregationalism to American life has been its liberation of the same from all bondage to ecclesiasticism. Liberty in America has been identified from the beginning with liberty of worship, liberty of conscience, liberty of soul. That this is the case is due to the nature of its first immigrants. The most subtle bondage, and the most inevitable refuge of false authority in the State is bound up with religious bondage. When that was shaken off by the high simplicity of the Congregational principle, the peculiar quality of American democracy was rendered possible.

As it happens, the distinctive message of Congregationalism today is one concerning intellectual liberty. It is less sectarian than the sects to the right of it or to the left of it. It insists on equal liberty for the men of conservative and the men of progressive temper. Like all liberty that is efficient, it recognizes its limits. Liberty in the Congregational fellowship is limited by immeasurable reverence before Jesus Christ. It does not seek to disguise its unqualified Christian faith and hope. But all who "say that Jesus is Lord" it recognizes with Paul as being under the sway of the Holy Spirit. It insists upon nothing which is indif-

ferent to that Spirit and includes all who have been divinely blessed with this supreme insight. Its fellowship is the richest and most varied in the religious world, because it is consciously based upon a profound distinction between the one thing needful and the many things interesting, important and serviceable.—*Ambrose W. Vernon.*

Democracy and Solidarity. It remains for Congregationalism to show that the freedom of the State is not inconsistent with the obligations of international brotherhood; that a free education and loyalty to the truth which alone can make men free can go hand in hand; that a free church can co-exist as a part of that one Catholic Church which has one spirit but many members; and that the free approach of the soul to God does not exclude that corporate fellowship and communion which binds all Christ's people together in one body.

If the message of the past to America has been freedom, the message of the present is perfect harmony of that freedom with the higher solidarity toward which the whole creation moves and for which it groans.—*Raymond Calkins.*

Representative Democracy. Representative government in counties is necessitated by the extent of territory covered; in cities, it is necessitated by the multitude of people.—*John Fiske:* Civil Government in the United States, p. 101.

The Congregational churches, having their county, city, national and world-wide life, have been forced to develop forms of representative or indirect democracy. This is not subversive of our original character or destructive of Congregational principles. Our safety lies in preserving in local affairs the direct action of the primary assembly. We do not substitute representative democracy; we add it and assign it its own secondary realm. We constitute and direct it from below.—*Nash:* Cong. Administration, pp. 19-20.

Representative Government May Be Democratic. Laws they are not therefore which public approbation hath not made so. But approbation not only they give who personally declare their assent by voice, sign or act, but also when others do it in their names by right originally at least derived from them. As in parliaments, councils, and the like assemblies, although we be not personally ourselves present, notwithstanding our assent is by reason of other agents there in our behalf. And what we do by others, no reason but that it should stand as our deed, no less effectually to bind us than if ourselves had done it in person.—*Hooker:* Ecclesiastical Polity, Bk. I.

What Was the Tri-Church Union Discussion? The National Council at Des Moines in 1904 took action "favorable to closer union of the Methodist Protestant, United Brethren, and Congregational denominations," and gave to its Committee on Comity, Federation and Unity, of which Rev. Dr. William Hayes Ward was chairman, authority to negotiate with those bodies, looking toward such closer union. Other actions provided for the election of delega-

tions and the first meeting of a General Council of the three denominations. Such a council, in which the Congregational churches were represented by 110 delegates, including many of the prominent leaders of the denomination, convened at Dayton, Ohio, February 7-9, 1906. A second General Council met in Chicago, March 19-21, to hear the reports of three committees of twenty-one each on doctrine, polity and vested interests. The Chicago meeting approved a "Plan of Union" and this was commended to the churches by a committee consisting of Rev. Messrs. Washington Gladden, Wm. Douglas Mackenzie and Asher Anderson. The matter came up for extended discussion at Cleveland in 1907 and the following resolutions reported by a Committee of Twenty-eight, of which Rev. Nehemiah Boynton was chairman, and Rev. William E. Barton, secretary, read as follows:

> We recognize in the Act of Union adopted by the General Council of the United Churches at Chicago the fundamental principles by which such union must be accomplished. The aim of that act is the desire of our churches. The act provides for a representative council of the united churches, combines their benevolent activities, and conserves their vested interests. It makes provision for the gradual amalgamation of their state and local organizations, leaving the people of each locality free to choose their own times and methods for the completion of such unions. It contemplates, as the result of a continued fellowship of worship and work, a blending of the three denominations into one. This is the end to which the Act of Union looks forward, and these are essential means of its accomplishment.
>
> We recognize that, for the consummation of this union, each denomination is prepared to modify its administrative forms. Among our ministers and churches there have arisen divergent opinions both as to the interpretation of certain clauses and as to the effect of certain provisions in the Act of Union; while of some details therein proposed important criticisms have been made.
>
> We recognize, further, that the other church bodies, when they convene for consideration of the Act of Union, may likewise find that certain of its features can be improved.
>
> We, therefore, invite the other two denominations to unite with us in referring the Act of Union to the General Council of the United Churches, to afford opportunity for perfecting the plan of union; the General Council to report its results to the national body of each denomination.—Minutes of National Council, 1907, pp. 364-365.

The other two denominations did not continue the nego-

tiations beyond this point, and the Tri-Church Union, which nominally is still in existence and subject to call, ceased active existence. The matter is notable not only as constituting an interesting chapter in our denominational history, but also has an important bearing upon our own denominational life. During the period of discussions some Congregational writers and speakers pointed out with clearness and insistence that all we hoped to gain in the way of more compact organization could be obtained by us without the sacrifice, which the author of this volume characterized as "denominational suicide." The agreement of Congregationalists upon a tentative platform which might have served as a possible basis of union with other denominations, did much to crystallize sentiment within the denomination itself in favor of a more effective organization of the denomination for the doing of its own work. It is this influence upon our own denominational development which gives the movement a place in this chapter.

Is Congregationalism Representative? The most important effect of the reorganization effected in the National Council in 1913 was not the adoption of a new set of rules, however important or unimportant these may prove to be, nor the formulation of a new doctrinal statement, however useful or useless that may prove, nor yet the changes wrought in the administration of the missionary societies, all of which are subject to change, and some of which are practically certain to be changed. The really important thing done at Kansas City was the recognition of the representative principle by the churches, expressed through the National Council and the societies, a controlling majority henceforth to be chosen by the churches, either directly or through agencies in which the representative principle is recognized. This change, also, lies at the heart of recent reorganization in our state societies, which, one by one, have taken over in the name of the churches activities formerly delegated to voluntary organizations. Congregationalism is conscious of a real denominational autonomy;

the autonomy of the local church, independent within its sphere; the autonomy of district and state bodies through which the churches effect their united work and fellowship; and the autonomy of our national church organization, the National Council, and the societies, a controlling majority of whose voting members are members of the National Council. We are, what the preamble of the National Council affirms, a representative democracy.

The Representative Principle Declared. With this view of the Congregational order as representative, and not purely independent, your Committee unite in the judgment that local, state, and national associations afford ample organization for the direction of all of our denominational activities, and that the function of these organizations may be inclusive of all such interests, not imperiling but directly safeguarding the autonomy and liberty of the local church. Believing, therefore, that in the interest of simplicity, unity and efficiency our organism should be representative, we urge the elimination of all such organizations as are not under the direction of our representative bodies.—Report of the Com. on Polity, Nat. Council, 1907.

The Representative Principle Affirmed. The Congregational Churches of the United States, by delegates in National Council assembled, reserving all the rights and cherished memories belonging to this organization under its former Constitution, and declaring the steadfast allegiance of the churches composing the Council to the faith which our fathers confessed, which from age to age has found its expression in the historic creeds of the Church universal and of this Communion, and affirming our loyalty to the basic principles of our representative democracy, hereby set forth the things most surely believed among us concerning faith, polity and fellowship.—Preamble to the Constitution of the National Council.

Popular Sovereignty and Representative Unity. We must hold certainly to the sovereignty of the people under Christ in our Church organization. We cannot go back upon that, either in Church or State. But we need not hold it in a sense which endangers the larger interests of the Church of God. We certainly need not hold it in a sense that is antagonistic to representative government, for democracy is not annulled but rather more effectively expressed, through representative government.—*Meredith Davis:* Congregationalism and Its Ideal, Constructive Quarterly, Sept., 1915, pp. 550, 551.

Congregationalism the Mother of the Nation. Historically it was the mother of the nation. The seed principle of a Congregational church is the republican principles of the State. And being itself a democracy, its natural training of its members is as much better to the use of making them good citizens for the nation, as the discipline of a merchant ship is kindlier than that of a machine

shop, in fitting sailors for the uses of a man-of-war. In educating its members to think for themselves, a Congregational church educates them to be intelligent voters in the State. In schooling them to accept and discharge more or less weighty responsibilities, it prepares them with some good fidelity to bear the burdens of the commonwealth. To say that the aristocratic or monarchic polities especially befit the American idea of the State, is to proclaim grapes of thorns and prophesy figs of thistles.—*Dexter:* Handbook, pp. 131, 132.

Is Congregationalism Necessarily Provincial? Early Congregationalism was not merely provincial; it was parochial. More than that, it was almost individual. This is not to be said to its shame; it is rather an occasion of glory. It recovered to the local church and to the individual soul the rights that belonged to them. The soul is sovereign; it is in bondage to no other soul or collection of souls. The local church is supreme in the management of its own affairs; it needs no overlord, and will tolerate none.

But the time came when Congregationalism had to think in larger units than those of the local church. Nobly it rose to this effort on its spiritual side. It learned to pray "Thy kingdom come" with the map of the world spread out before its eyes. But on the side of organization it did not readily learn to think in permanent units larger than those of the local organization.

Even in local matters it was difficult for Congregationalism to think of the church as doing its own work in its own name. It has been a serious loss to Congregationalism that it has supposed it must do practically all its work in the name of some organization apart from the churches. Thus the local church did not really manage its own affairs, but depended on a parish, or an ecclesiastical society, a fifth wheel if ever a coach had one. The State Conference did not dream of such a thing as doing directly the united work of the churches within the state; it organized a State Home Missionary Society, even though it was composed of precisely the same persons, and met at the same time and place; it was a needless and really uncongregational way of doing it. Even now there are good people who fear to

incorporate the National Council; and for their sake the plan of the Commission of Nineteen, which provided for the incorporation of the Council, was abandoned. To these timid souls it seemed much safer to have a Corporation for the National Council, rather than an incorporation of the National Council. To be sure, the two bodies are composed of the same people, and have the same powers, but it seems to some people much safer to do the thing by indirection. As a matter of fact it is no safer and no better. An incorporation of the National Council would be quite as safe as a Corporation for the National Council, and would bring the control just one step nearer to the churches.

There is no occasion to disturb the present order of things. The Corporation for the National Council is admirably planned, and its powers are ample, and it is fully controlled by the National Council; it is better to leave it as it is: but the opposition to direct incorporation merely illustrates what has been from the beginning a defect in our Congregational thinking; it has been hard for us to think of the churches themselves at work as churches in larger units than the local parish.

In the beginning Congregationalism was necessarily and rightfully provincial, even parochial; but Congregationalism is learning to think in larger units. Over against parochial Congregationalism rises the larger and abiding vision of Continental Congregationalism. We shall not be disobedient to this heavenly vision.

We will neither repudiate our own past nor burn over the ground of our future. We love our history. Even its mistakes are precious to us. We cannot afford to lose out of our denominational life any essential element that ever has been in it or that has found expression through it. By the grace of God we are what we are, and we have something to contribute to the religious life of the world through our very limitations. If we have overemphasized freedom, there were others whose polity imperiled it. If we magnified individualism, the world needed our exaggeration of

the value of the individual soul and the right of private judgment. If we insisted on the autonomy of the local church to the point of connectional weakness, that insistence had its partial justification in the existence of ecclesiastical tyranny against which we were making a needed protest.

But none of these things put us in bondage. "As the Lord's free people" the Pilgrim Fathers adopted the Scrooby confession, and as the Lord's free people we plan our work.

Are we disloyal to the past in reaching out to lay hold on the opportunities of the future? Not so; we should be disloyal to the past if we did anything else.

We are the Pilgrim Fathers of the future. We are launching new Mayflowers. We are adapting the forms and methods which we have inherited from the great men of yesterday to the unparalleled challenge and opportunity of tomorrow. We are making Continental and Catholic Congregationalism. It is to be continental, and more than continental territorially, and catholic in its spirit and purpose.

The precise period of the genesis of the modern movement in the development of a denominational consciousness and of a representative democratic order is not easily determined. The surrender of our heritage in the Middle East to the Presbyterians and the slow development of Congregationalism in the Middle West, due to the disinclination of our New England fathers to contest the ground with our Presbyterian friends, though retarding Congregational life and growth, resulted in stirring our constituency to aggressive assertion of their denominational life and character. It resulted, too, in the organization of Congregational state bodies with much more clearly defined and representative ecclesiastical character than those of the East and hastened the calling of the Michigan City convention for the advancement of common Congregational interests. Once awakened to a consciousness of place and power, there gradually evolved out of the Middle West the demand for a national representative body, which held its first session in Boston in 1865 and the first of its regularly successive triennial sessions in Oberlin in 1871. For some sessions the Council remained a purely deliberative body, little more than a public debating forum, voicing its judgments in timid and meager fashion, and not itself recognizing any function other than the purely advisory character its name implied and its constitution defined.

The initiation of a representative body of chosen delegates

carried with it, however, an implication of the wish and will of the churches which was destined to find expression in the assumption of administrative functions. Gradually the Council itself became the means of establishing a consistent Congregational order. The session of 1886, held in the Union Park Church, Chicago, and immediately following the stirring and stormy session of the American Board at Des Moines, marked the beginning of a new era in our order. Here was fought out the issue between the older individualism and looser construction as represented by the distinguished Nestor of Congregationalism, Rev. Henry M. Dexter, D. D., and the newer view of a representative democracy as held by Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D., and Rev. A. Hastings Ross, D. D. These latter stood for a representative organization in each state wherein ministers were to be accredited. The issue was the seemingly narrow one of the determination of ministerial standing, but the resultant and decisive victory of the new democracy paved the way for a consistent democratic order. Gradually the Council became conscious of its own place in the development of the life and work of the churches and unconsciously burst the bonds of its own constitutional fetters. Its voice and expression served to modify the representative order of our benevolent societies—a forecast of a closer and more intimate relation of these societies to the body of the church's representatives. The passing of time has developed the determination of this relation into a national Congregational issue.

The ripening of this issue had its origin in the Middle West and on the Pacific Coast. It was the natural outgrowth of the closer organization of our state bodies, whereby the administrative work of the states has become a single unit under a central board of administration and with the several departments of missionary service rightly co-ordinated. The lapse of the council system necessitated the utilization of committees of the district bodies for advisory and administrative service. The heretofore rank heresy of ministerial ordination by associational act is not now uncommon. The states not dependent upon the national benevolent societies for the support of their missionary work within their borders have assumed full direction of these interests without the useless machinery of auxiliary bodies, vesting all administrative and executive direction in the hands of the churches in state organization. States dependent upon the national societies have followed this pattern so far as practicable, and all have become incorporated bodies, with full administrative powers and able to hold property, invest funds and disburse moneys at their pleasure.

Congregationalism has not only survived the process, but promises to be increasingly effective, and better relates itself to the dawning movement of church federation, with possibilities of alignment and co-operation impracticable under the old and looser construction. And all this has been wrought out without infringing in the least degree upon the liberty of the local church or the freedom of individual faith.

This widespread movement of reorganization, initiated almost simultaneously in the several states of the Middle West, had its origin, not in a panic, though our denominational conditions and inertia were so grave as to challenge serious attention and to call

for prompt correction, but in the instinctive appreciation of the greater effectiveness of the simpler and more centralized administration as contrasted with the heretofore multiform and complex. The success of the new order is not to be determined by statistical results. It will require at least a decade of years to make reliable deductions. Its test will be in the maintenance of a truly democratic spirit. If, instead of creating efficient superintendents and strong administrative boards, it breeds bosses and rings, it has within itself, as a ready corrective, the voice of the church's representatives.

In the positing of ministerial standing in an association of Churches (or Churches and Ministers), instead of in the ephemeral council, thereby creating permanence of ministerial character, and in the representative coalition of associations in a national body, a new representative principle was introduced into Congregationalism which would have brought proper balance to the two cardinal principles of our polity, autonomy and fellowship, had it not been that our inheritance was one of anomalous and complex character, in which extra-Congregational usages and institutions had taken root, not easily to be brought into alignment with the better order. It has taken a long time for our churches to be dispossessed of the idea that liberty is expressed only in independence; that autonomy is self-government without counsel, except when asked for; that the liberty and independence of benevolent institutions, created outside of the churches, is to be sacredly observed. The democratic principle has not only become imperiled but negatived. There has been an undue swing of the pendulum to the independence rim of the arc. It is the reaffirmation and application of the democratic principle which most urgently calls for a more consistent and effective organization of our forces. Two impelling factors lead to this end: The necessity of the situation, and the Providential opportunity.—*John P. Sanderson:* Main Lines of Congregational Reorganization, 1906.

Have We Sacrificed Democracy? Democracy has not been sacrificed in the recent changes in Congregational polity. So far as these changes relate to the administration of our denominational affairs larger than local, it may truthfully be affirmed that these have never been so directly under control of the churches as now.

When Congregationalism began its expansion in New England, and was learning its first lessons in connectionalism, there were three kinds of experiment in which the churches tried out the various forms of fellowship through larger units than the local church. One was by the calling of councils. This was a convenient and within certain limits an effective expression of fellowship without ecclesiastical control. Yet the council was subject to certain

marked limitations. It was not large enough nor representative enough nor permanent enough nor responsible enough for the larger requirements of fellowship and efficiency. Moreover, a council could be quite as tyrannical as any of the more permanent forms of fellowship. There was a time when the churches in and about Boston, uniting in councils, constituted a virtual close corporation to prevent the organization of new churches; and in that usurpation of a power wholly foreign to the spirit and genius of the council, those churches were quite as effectively organized to block progress as if they had been solidified into a synod.

The next form of fellowship and connectionalism was expressed through civil authority. This began with the colonies of New England, and lasted long after those colonies became states. The General Court of Massachusetts called the Synod that adopted the Cambridge Platform in 1648, the Boston Synod of 1662 and the Reforming Synod of 1680. The General Court of Connecticut convened the Saybrook Synod of 1708. The grip of the State was on the wrist of the Church for well nigh two centuries.

The third way of uniting for common work was through corporations chartered by the state, though managed by men of the church, and called to existence for the extension of the work of the churches. These voluntary societies, great as was their achievement, were not representative of the churches. A corporation chartered in Connecticut entered into covenant with the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1801, and bound not only the whole of Congregationalism as it then was, but the whole of unborn Congregationalism as it was to be, for a full disastrous half century.

The important thing to be remembered, however, is not whether these various plans worked well or ill at the various periods in which they were employed, but that none of them were democratic. The changes of recent years, which the unthinking have sometimes criticized as a departure from

historic Congregationalism, are really a frank application of the Congregational principle to our modern and growing tasks, not to the detriment of the Congregational principle, but to the displacement of certain principles and organizations which never were Congregational in their forms of operation.

Dr. Nehemiah Boynton, while moderator of the National Council, was accustomed to speak of the "unappropriated areas" of ecclesiastical power, which the loose organization of the early days made possible in Congregationalism, which areas had gradually been squatted upon by organizations formed for worthy ends, but possessing no title deeds under the forms of historic Congregationalism. The method and spirit of recent changes has been to recover these areas of power for the churches themselves.

They speak with little knowledge of the past, with little ability to evaluate the present, with little vision for the future, who maintain that the older way was more democratic than the newer way. Under the methods at present accepted among us the churches themselves control the entire machinery of the denominations, from the local parish to the National Council. There is autonomy everywhere, as broad as it is long. There is local autonomy in the local church; district autonomy of the churches in the District Association; state-wide autonomy of the churches united for their state work in the State Conference, and needing no outside corporation for the doing of it; and nation-wide autonomy for the churches united in national work and fellowship.

There is authority only so far as to be commensurate with responsibility, and the only authority anywhere is the authority of the churches.

An Inconsistency Now Partially Remedied. Out of this condition there lie two pathways and only two: We may return to the original order; we may disorganize our National Council; we may re-emphasize the ecclesiastical Council and again vest in it ministerial standing; we may adjourn our local and state bodies sine die; we may re-commission our benevolent societies to their

independent service; we may revive the spirit of the independence of the local church; and we may place ourselves out of line with the whole trend of the day because of our insistence upon the worth of the independent order of church life; that were a consistent policy. Or we may carefully counsel together and endeavor properly to co-ordinate our forces; we may develop a truly Congregational, representative and democratic system; we may increase the functions of the local association, state association and National Council; we may ask the national societies to become constituent parts of our common organism; that were a consistent policy. Our present relations are inconsistent.

The logic of the situation, the trend of the times, the growing conviction of our denominational leaders, the demand of the rank and file of our churches is along the last named program. Can it be done without sacrificing the rights of the local church? It must be done to preserve those rights. In the present constitution of several of our benevolent interests neither the local church, the local association or conference, the state Association, nor the National Council have any constitutional rights, however large their moral influence.

The integration of our denominational interests is the most important task before us in the realm of ecclesiastical order. The pathway is clear and the end to be sought is feasible. The unit of our fellowship is the local church and the character of our fellowship is that of a representative democracy. In the development of a consistent Congregational polity these declarations should be constantly kept in mind; if we keep them in the foreground we shall need to take care that the expression of our will shall lie just as near the local churches as possible. Any plan which minimizes the function of the local association and magnifies the state body at its expense is to be regarded with disfavor as removing the responsibility one step farther from the local church.—*John P. Sanderson:* What Modifications of Congregational Polity Are Desirable? 1907.

The Larger Autonomy. We equally insist that our Congregational churches are more than independent units. While recognizing the right of independent action, even to the withdrawal of fellowship from the body of churches, we are assured that the individual churches will find larger life and usefulness in common pact of fellowship with other churches. Unitedly they may meet in local, state, and national bodies, vesting in these organizations such privileges of administration and direction as they may choose. In such representative bodies their own independence and will may always find truer expression than in corporations organized without such direct representation.—Report of the Committee on Polity, Nat. Council, 1907.

Our Ideal Not Yet Realized. Our constitutive idea finds expression in relation to the service of the Kingdom of God, and so long as we ensure that expression of it, we save alive the soul of Congregationalism. It is clear that the basal principle of the Independent Church is of the greatest significance and value. Everything proceeds from the creative presence of Christ in the fellowship of believers. Applied to the pulpit, it throws into relief the sacramental significance of preaching. In respect to the act of

worship, it implies a revised doctrine of the Real Presence. In relation to service, it constitutes believers the veritable Body of Christ—hands with which He builds His Kingdom, feet with which He carries the Gospel to all the nations of the earth, while its application to the Church and churches demands, not perhaps unvarying uniformity, certainly not the present disunion and strife, but such a relationship as is expressed in the words "that they may be one, even as we are one." It is a profound and majestic ideal. We find it inadequately expressed in Congregationalism as it is, and we are driven to the conclusion that for the effective expression of our own cardinal principle, considerable changes are necessary, involving less conservatism with regard to the polity that exists, and a clearer recognition of the fact that a more collectivist polity and organization are indispensable to the achievement of our one great end—the Kingdom of God upon earth.—*Meredith Davis:* Congregationalism and Its Ideal; Const. Quarterly, Sept., 1915.

Twentieth-Century Congregationalism. We have given no judicial function to the National Council, or, indeed, to any organization outside of the individual church. An effort has been made to secure something of continuity in the organic life of the denomination, as represented in the National Council. Its members are elected for two meetings, two years apart, one-half being elected each time. The officers continue from one meeting to the next; the Nominating Committee is a standing body, renewed in part at each meeting, but charged with the responsibility of seeing that proper nominations are made. The Council will have large influence in safeguarding and protecting the rights of the churches, to which it will keep close. It will open the way for whatever of consolidation is necessary in the Missionary Societies which are all under their own charters, having sprung up spontaneously and developed their own specific work alongside of others, who, at times, have been doing the same work. The supervision of their work, for which the Council has provided, will also tend greatly to produce harmony between our action and that of the Missionary Societies of other denominations, which, happily, are now all engaged in adjusting their relations in the interest of Christian efficiency and the avoiding of over-churching certain regions, at the expense of neglecting others. But even more important than this, within the life of the denomination, is the duty laid upon the Board of Missions, which is the executive department of the Council in this connection, that it shall supervise the raising of money for missionary and benevolent purposes, so far as to secure the adoption of the Apportionment Plan among the churches, and to indicate how much money the denomination, as a whole, ought to aim to raise; instituting, if possible, such methods as will secure the raising of the money. In proportion as this is effectively done, the working secretaries and officers of the various Missionary Societies will be relieved from what has hitherto been a large and burdensome part of their work. They will be left free, more than in the past, to give their time to the administration of their societies and the promotion and supervision of their definite tasks. The late Archbishop Temple said to Christians in England: "We are now men governed by principle, and cannot any longer rely upon the impulses of youth or the discipline of childhood." Our effort as

Congregationalists is to give to the Christian principles which underlie our ecclesiastical life a positive emphasis and a larger significance.

We have made something of a fetish of Separatism; and Individualism, often carried to extremes has been our curse. The time now has come for Unity. A true fellowship with one another can alone be our salvation. Other Nonconformists have learned to work together, and yet abide in love. We have made a flag of our individualism, which bears the same relation to independence that license does to liberty.

Happily, a new spirit has come upon our churches, which was strikingly exhibited at the Kansas City meeting, which stands distinguished, before all else, for the kindliness of its temper, the earnestness, and at the same time the good nature, of its debates, and the keenness of its interest in the questions that concerned the life of the denomination, coupled with the overwhelming sense of the guidance of the Spirit of God, and the undisturbed spiritual atmosphere which characterized all the sessions of the Council.—*H. A. Stimson,* in Bibliothica Sacra, Jan., 1915.

What Is the World Conference on Faith and Order? The World Conference on Faith and Order was proposed at the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States in 1910, in the following resolution:

Whereas, There is today among all Christian people a growing desire for the fulfillment of Our Lord's prayer that all His disciples may be one; that the world may believe that God has sent Him:

Resolved, The House of Bishops concurring, That a Joint Commission be appointed to bring about a Conference for the consideration of questions touching Faith and Order, and that all Christian Communions throughout the world which confess our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour be asked to unite with us in arranging for and conducting such a Conference. The Commission shall consist of seven Bishops, appointed by the Chairman of the House of Bishops, and seven Presbyters and seven Laymen, appointed by the President of the House of Deputies, and shall have power to add to its number and to fill any vacancies occurring before the next General Convention.

These further resolutions have been adopted:

(1) The Conference is for the definite purpose of considering those things in which we differ, in the hope that a better understanding of divergent views of Faith and Order will result in a deepened desire for reunion and in official action on the part of the separated Communions themselves. It is the business of the Conference, not to take such official action, but to inspire it and to prepare the way for it.

(2) All Christian Communions are to be asked "to unite with us in arranging for and conducting" the Conference. We, ourselves, are to take only preliminary action, and at the earliest moment possible are to act in association with others. Formal

association for joint action can be effected only after a sufficient number of commissions shall have been appointed, and sufficient opportunity to appoint such commissions shall have been afforded to all Communions, both Catholic and Protestant.

(3) The Conference will have no power to commit any participating Communion upon any point.

The Congregational and many other denominations have voted to accept this invitation. It is not known at the time of the publication of this volume when the conference will be held.

What Is Our Attitude Toward Current Movements for Union? The Congregational churches have always been ready to consider plans for closer working union with all branches of the Church of Christ, and are ready also to confer concerning organic union. Questions of union at present mooted are likely to crystallize around the invitation of the Episcopalians to unite in a World Conference on Faith and Order. Whether that Conference will be productive of good we may not now predict. Our denomination will be represented in it, and will meet more than half way any proposals looking toward the closer relations of our Christian bodies.

It needs to be said, however, that the Congregational churches cannot fail to know that the Episcopalians are at present facing a very serious division in their own ranks, and we do not wish them to divide over us. It would be a poor union that should draw one wing of the Episcopal Church a trifle closer toward us, and at the same time draw it out of all fellowship with the rest of its own communion.

It would seem better on the whole that the Episcopal churches should themselves decide on what basis they will propose fellowship with us. If they are ready to confer with us as churches conferring with churches, we shall understand each other; but if that issue is to be kept in the background at the outset, only to emerge later in the declaration that we are conferring as "The Church" in conference with "separated brethren" who are not in "The

Church," the conference will not make much progress beyond the point at which that declaration is made.

Yet that is precisely what a large proportion of Episcopalians do affirm; and they who say such things need not talk much about desiring union with other Christian bodies.

It has lately been said by a good man of our own fellowship who has become somewhat enraptured by the dream of a closer union with Episcopalians, "Let us not ask what they will concede to us until we tell them what we are willing to concede to them."

The answer to this is simple; we have already conceded all that we shall ever ask them to concede. We concede that they are Christians, and we do not re-confirm them; we concede that theirs are true churches, and we do not ignore them; we concede that their ministers are ordained with a valid ordination, and we treat them as Christian ministers. We shall never ask more than this of the Episcopalians, and we cannot ask less of them than the full admission that ours, too, are true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, possessed of a valid ministry, and administering true sacraments. If Episcopalians answer to this, "You must not ask us to concede at the outset what must be the very point at issue between us," we must answer that we cannot assist them in settling this question, since it is for themselves they must settle it; we do not ask nor permit them to decide this question for us.

If again they answer, "We cannot admit these things concerning you without giving up the ground on which our own Church stands," our answer is that in that case there is no need for them to invite us into conference; we would not willingly be responsible for results so unfortunate. They must measure this risk to their own system before they invite us to confer with them. On the other hand, we see very little value in their sending us an invitation which has prefixed to it a denial of our ecclesiastical existence.

If Bishop Gore of Oxford correctly states the position

of the Episcopal Church in his reply to the Archbishop of Canterbury concerning Kikuyu, and the episcopate is of the essence of a valid ministry, the negotiations may as well halt at this point as at any other. He says:

> The conclusion seems to me quite irresistible that the whole idea of the visible Catholic Church has been from the beginning bound up with the institution of the ministerial succession which took shape universally and solely in the succession of Bishops; that, if in any respect the Church Catholic has exercised the authority of binding and loosing, it has exercised this authority so as to make Episcopal ordination strictly necessary for ministry in the Church—of the *esse*, not of the *bene esse* of "valid" or recognizable ministry. The Episcopate as the necessary mark of the Church holds exactly the same position of Catholic authority as the Creed or the Canon of Scripture. To accept a non-episcopal ministry is an act of explicit rebellion against the authority of the ancient and undivided Church than which there can be no rebellion more complete. Then, when I go back to the origin of our religion, I am convinced that the institution of the visible Church and its ministry belongs to its original essence and bears the authority of the Lord Himself.
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> "Valid" and "invalid" expresses a different and more fundamental idea than "regular" and "irregular." If there is a visible Church having authority to bind and loose in the administration of sacraments, it must say, "Sacraments administered under such and such conditions are not sacraments which we can recognize—they carry no longer with them the guarantee of the Church." The Church has not said that Baptisms celebrated by those who are not priests are not valid: it has not even said universally or in all cases that Confirmations not administered by a Bishop are invalid; it has not as a whole said that schism invalidates sacraments: but it has said that ordinations to holy orders not celebrated by a Bishop are invalid, and that Eucharists not celebrated by an episcopally ordained priest are invalid. Let us be thankful that the Church cannot and does not claim to restrict the free action of God. But it does claim, and the claim seems to me irresistible, that the new covenant was with the Church, and the Church was endued with authority to bind and loose, and has done so with an unmistakable emphasis and constancy and universality in respect of Creed and Episcopate alike. If this be so, and the Anglican Church accepts the results of this determination of the Church, and interprets in the light of this determination great passages or principles of Holy Scripture, then it seems to me that we must, in the mission-field as at home, give plain notice of our platform; and I feel quite convinced that if it is once understood where we intend to stand—where we must stand if the Anglican communion is to hold together—one result is certain to follow: we must be left out of any general Protestant federation.

Episcopalians need not approach us with an invitation to confer on church union, and at the same time tell us

that "To accept a non-episcopal ministry is an act of explicit rebellion against the authority of the ancient and undivided Church than which there can be no rebellion more complete."

But the history of the Episcopal Church is against any such position. A recent article in the London "Churchman" summarizes the historic position of the Episcopal Church, and shows that to concede the validity of Congregational and Presbyterian orders would in no sense invalidate the Episcopal position, or if it would, then that position was surrendered by the Episcopalians long ago:

> The Act of 1570, whatever its design, was certainly interpreted and employed to permit foreign non-episcopal divines to exercise their ministry in our Church without re-ordination, by merely subscribing the Articles. For this Act to supply the churches "with pastors of sound religion" declared that every person who "pretended to be a priest or minister of God's Holy Word and Sacraments, by reason of any other form of institution, consecration, or ordering" than the forms set forth by authority under Edward VI and Elizabeth "should declare his assent and subscribe to all the Articles of Religion" (Prothero, "Statutes and Const. Documents," 1894, p. 64).
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> There is, moreover, absolutely conclusive proof that the Tulchane or titular Bishops existing in the Scotch Church in 1603 were merely Parliamentary officials in Presbyterian orders only, and that, therefore, Canon 55 in exhorting us to pray for the Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland, "distinctly recognized a Church possessing only Presbyterian orders as a branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church." This clear testimony to the validity of Presbyterian orders was further affirmed when Archbishop Bancroft refused to re-ordain as "deacons and priests" the ministers who were consecrated as Bishops for the Scotch Church in 1610, on the ground that "where Bishops could not be had" Presbyterian ordination "must be esteemed lawful"; otherwise it might be doubted if there were any lawful vocation in most of the Reformed Churches (Spotiswood, "History of the Church of Scotland," Book VII, p. 514). Bishop Morton, a little later on, also similarly refused the Archbishop of Spalato's request to reordain a foreign Reformed divine who was to minister in England, maintaining "that it could not be done but to the scandal of the Reformed Churches in which he would have no hand" since ordination was "the *jus antiquum* of presbyters" (Neal, "History of the Puritans," Vol. II, p. 353).
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> Besides the sufficient testimony of such representative Churchmen as Lord Chancellor Clarendon, Bishops Burnet, Cosin, and Fleetwood, that these foreign Reformed clergy were given cures of souls in England without further ordination, and were therefore required as part of their ministerial duties to administer the Com-

munion to Episcopalians, we have well attested individual examples of this practice. Wittinghame, an Englishman, ordained at Geneva, was Dean of Durham for years, while Archbishop Grindal's license to John Morrison, the Scotch Presbyterian divine, to exercise his ministry "throughout the Province of Canterbury" is still preserved (Strype, "Life of Grindal," p. 402). We find further that many French Reformed clergy ministered in English Churches in the Channel Isles without re-ordination. (See Hole's "Church History," p. 278.)—*Rev. C. Sydney Carter* in The Churchman (London), October, 1915.

Episcopal Practice. For one hundred years after the Reformation we could go through the books and show you case after case not only of men who have been received to the Communion in the English Church never having been confirmed, but, mark this, brought to the universities to teach the future priests of the English Church, who had never been confirmed and never been ordained except by Presbyterian or Congregational ordinations; that there were canons of cathedrals and curates in many churches throughout England who had never received any ordination except that of Geneva or the Lutheran church or the Huguenots, and the people received the Communion at the hands of these men who themselves had previously received the Communion though they had never been confirmed. This is the unbroken history of the English Church for more than one hundred years to the passing of the act of uniformity after the restoration of Charles the Second. —*Rev. Leighton Parks:* (Episcopalian) Sermon in Boston in 1905.

Slender Basis of Episcopal Claim. I have thus far said nothing of the Apostolic succession of the Holy Ministry, upon which Anglicans lay so great stress. Indeed, it is only an incident, in a vastly greater whole. The Anglican complacency in the Apostolic succession of the ministry of the Church of England received a rude shock when Pope Leo XIII, after a careful and searching historical investigation, declared Anglican orders invalid. From the Roman point of view, his decision cannot be successfully disputed. If it be necessary to a valid Christian ministry that it should be the intention of the ordinal to ordain a real sacrificing priest, I have not the slightest doubt that Anglican orders are invalid, because the Anglican Reformers had no such intention. Anglican orders can be vindicated only on the ground that it was the intention of the Anglican Reformers, in their ordinal, to ordain such a reformed ministry of deacons, priests and bishops, as they supposed was the genuine Apostolic inheritance. If they made a mistake in omitting the important element of the sacrificial character of the priesthood, it was a mistake of ignorance, and not of wilful disobedience to their Lord.

But if Anglican orders must be defended on this ground, so can Lutheran and Presbyterian orders, for the Lutheran and Calvinistic Reformers were just as sincere and desirous of loyal adherence to the Lord's institution as were the Anglicans. If their orders are regarded as more defective than the Anglican, yet their intention was substantially the same.

We should consider the historical situation when the Churches of the Reformation were separated from Rome and compelled to

become national Churches. The Anglican episcopal succession depends upon a very slender thread. Not one of the four bishops who consecrated Archbishop Parker had jurisdiction in any of the historic sees. Under these circumstances it is altogether unhistorical and unbecoming for the Anglicans to exalt themselves above their Protestant brethren on the Continent, as if they alone had the true Apostolic Ministry.—*Prof. Chas. A. Briggs:* (Episcopalian) Art. in Independent, Jan. 28, 1904.

In like manner prominent Episcopalian scholars in our own country have repeatedly pointed out that the Episcopalians would suffer no loss of the essential principles of their denomination by meeting us on what Bishop Brown calls "a level plan of Church union." But there is no present consensus of opinion among Episcopalians looking toward any such level plan, and it is too soon to say what will be the result of these conferences.

Meantime, we have learned some things as a result of our conferences with the United Brethren and Methodist Protestants. One of them is that it is as hard to come to terms with a small denomination as with a large one. When we attempt church union, we might as well attempt it on a scale of some magnitude. Another is that differences in polity are more difficult to adjust than apparent differences of creed. If the time comes when we are ready to consider a merger that may involve the sacrifice of our denominational name, and that time is not now in sight, there are large bodies close akin to us in history and polity with whom negotiations would be more likely to be fruitful than any that at present are under discussion.

Our closest working union is with the Presbyterians. For more than a century we have had a practical working agreement with them in both home and foreign missionary work. They are becoming more democratic, and we are becoming more highly organized. If the Providence of God should bring into still closer union these two great Puritan bodies, on terms that guaranteed freedom and fellowship, it might be for the greater glory of God.

Close to us, on the other hand, stand the Baptists and the Disciples of Christ, who are bone of our bone and flesh

of our flesh. The latter, especially, by their open communion, stand where we can reach their hand over no high wall of separation. The Disciples have some qualities which we need, and we have some which they need. Territorially, they are strong where we are weak, and weak where we are strong. A far-sighted and statesmanlike plan of union would waste little present effort on bodies which probably cannot come into any closer fellowship with us without being rent asunder in the process, and, if we really want union, to seek it where there is some prospect that something might conceivably come of our efforts.

Christian union in some form is coming, and we, who have been leaders in preparing for it, will do well still to guide in its development. A discussion of these questions does not belong to this volume, further than to say what needs to be said, that union will follow lines of least resistance when it proceeds along lines of historic kinship in polity and in working ideals.

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